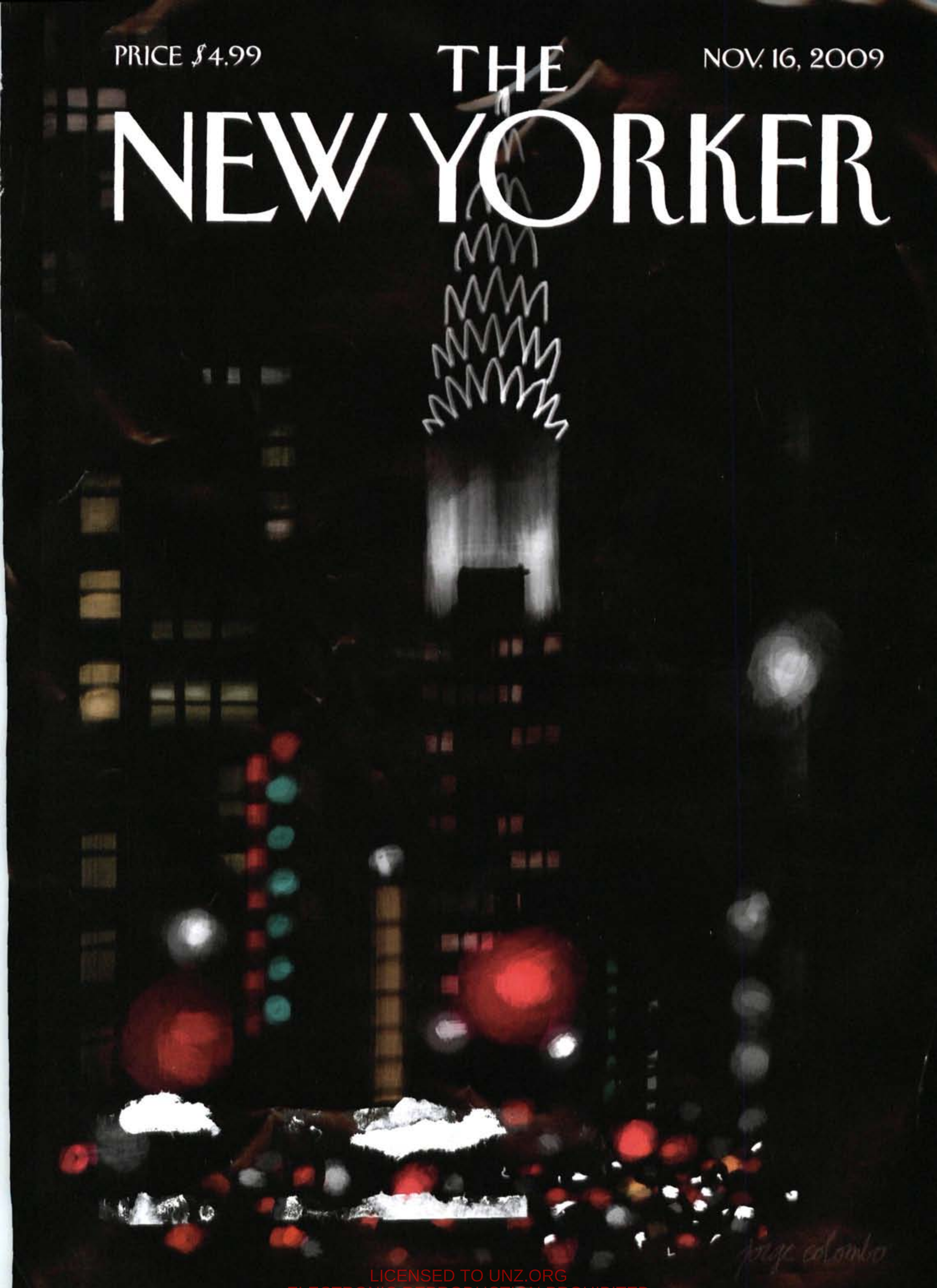
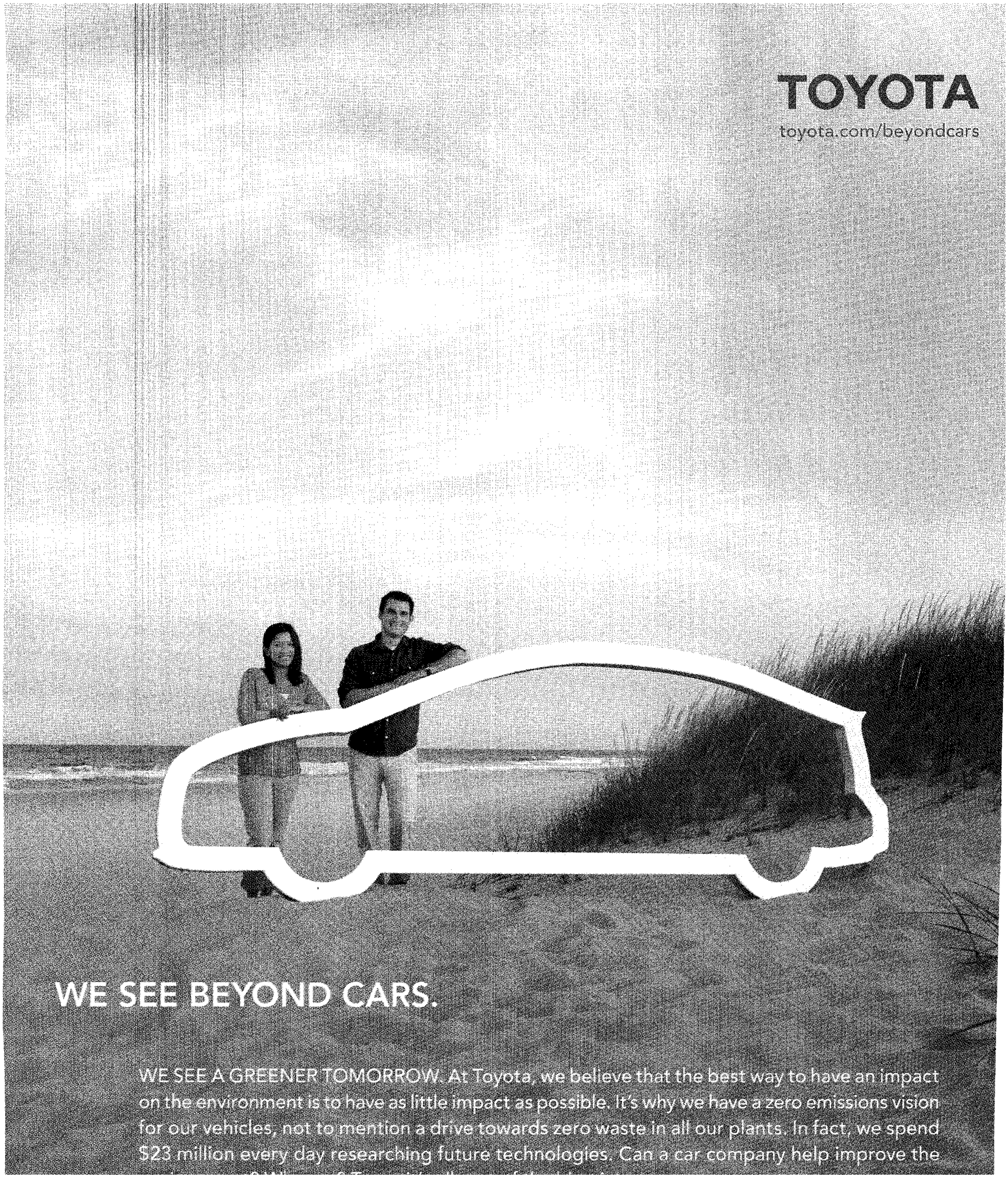
PRICE $4.99

THE NEW YORKER

NOV. 16, 2009


jorge colombo


TOYOTA
toyota.com/beyondcars
WE SEE BEYOND CARS.

WE SEE A GREENER TOMORROW. At Toyota, we believe that the best way to have an impact on the environment is to have as little impact as possible. It's why we have a zero emissions vision for our vehicles, not to mention a drive towards zero waste in all our plants. In fact, we spend $23 million every day researching future technologies. Can a car company help improve the

THE NEW YORKER

NOVEMBER 16, 2009

4 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
21 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
George Packer on the lessons of 1989; parade paperer; David Plouffe; a seed bank.

Seymour M. Hersh 28 ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY
Defending the Arsenal
Can Pakistan's nuclear weapons be secured?

Arthur Krystal 36 LIFE AND LETTERS
Slow Fade
F. Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood.

Margaret Talbot 42 A REPORTER AT LARGE
Nightmare Scenario
Learning to rewrite our bad dreams.

Ian Parker 52 LETTER FROM CAIRO
The Pharaoh
The man who controls Egyptology.

Yiyun Li 64 FICTION
"Alone"

THE CRITICS

Hilton Als 72 THE THEATRE
Richard Foreman's "Idiot Savant."

BOOKS

Elizabeth Kolbert 75 *"SuperFreakonomics."*
Ariel Levy 78 *The feminist revolution in retrospect.*
81 Briefly Noted

Peter Schjeldahl 82 THE ART WORLD
The Bauhaus at MOMA.

David Denby 84 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"The Messenger," "The Box."

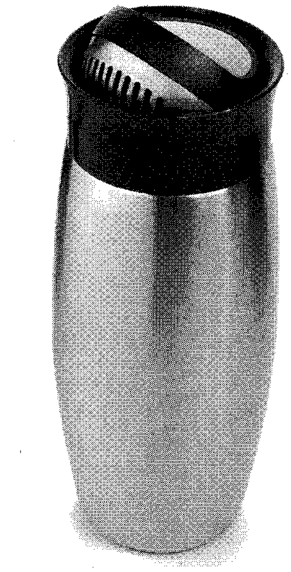
POEMS

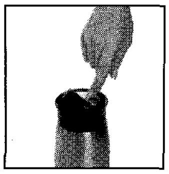
Dave Smith 60 "Fireflies"
Linda Pastan 66 "The Burglary"

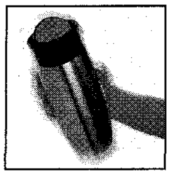
COVER *"Night Lights," by Jorge Colombo* DRAWINGS *David Sipress, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Zachary Kanin, Bob Eckstein, Kim Warp, Gahan Wilson, Julia Suits, Mick Stevens, Frank Cotham, William Haefeli, Barbara Smaller, Lee Lorenz, Jack Ziegler, Michael Maslin, Pat Byrnes, Christopher Weyant* SPOTS *Anders Wenngren*

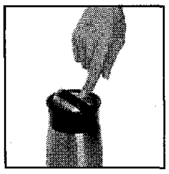
www.newyorker.com

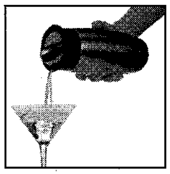
21st Century Shaker




Push Flip-Top closed.


Shake.


Push Flip-Top open.


Pour.

The new Flip-Top Cocktail Shaker is a feat of hydraulic engineering and high-tech sealing technology – a neater, cooler, easier way to mix cocktails. There *are* advantages to living in the 21st century.

See video at metrokane.com

AT:
Bed, Bath & Beyond, Sur La Table, KitchenKapers.com, Amazon.com, Winestuff.com, Le Gourmet Chef, Chef Central, Zabar's, BevMo!

rabbit™
BARWARE
by Metrokane

CONTRIBUTORS

Seymour M. Hersh ("Defending the Arsenal," p. 28) received this year's Illinois Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism. He has written eight books, including "Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib," which is available in paperback.

George Packer (Comment, p. 21) was recently a Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin. His book "Interesting Times: Writings from a Turbulent Decade" has just been published.

John Seabrook (The Talk of the Town, p. 24) is the author of three books, including "Flash of Genius: And Other True Stories of Invention."

Arthur Krystal ("Slow Fade," p. 36), an essayist and screenwriter, is writing a book about F. Scott Fitzgerald. His most recent book is "The Half-Life of an American Essayist."

Margaret Talbot ("Nightmare Scenario," p. 42) has been a staff writer since 2004.

Dave Smith (Poem, p. 60) is the author of, most recently, "Little Boats, Unsalvaged," a collection of poems, and "Hunting Men: Reflections on a Life in American Poetry," a book of essays. He teaches at Johns Hopkins University.

Ian Parker (The Talk of the Town, p. 22; "The Pharaoh," p. 52) has been writing for the magazine since 1994.

Yiyun Li (Fiction, p. 64) is the author of "A Thousand Years of Good Prayers," a short-story collection, and "The Vagrants," a novel, which came out earlier this year.

Linda Pastan (Poem, p. 66) has published twelve books of poetry, including "The Last Uncle" and "Queen of a Rainy Country." She is working on a new collection entitled "Traveling Light."

Ariel Levy (Books, p. 78) is a staff writer.

Peter Schjeldahl (The Art World, p. 82) won the 2008 Clark Prize for Excellence in Arts Writing. "Let's See: Writings on Art from *The New Yorker*" is his most recent book.

Hilton Als (The Theatre, p. 72), a staff writer and theatre critic, holds the Joan Leiman Jacobson Professorship in Nonfiction Writing at Smith College.

Jorge Colombo (Cover) is an illustrator, photographer, and graphic designer. His iPhone sketches can be seen on newyorker.com.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Video: Watch as *Jorge Colombo* draws this week's cover, plus the rest of his Finger Painting series. / Audio: *Steve Coll, George Packer,* and *Dorothy Wickenden* discuss Afghanistan; *Margaret Talbot* describes her nightmares; *Yiyun Li* reads a John McGahern story. / Slide show: *Peter Schjeldahl* on the Bauhaus. / Ask the Author: *Elizabeth Kolbert* chats live with readers. / Blogs: *Hendrik Hertzberg* on politics; *Nancy Franklin* on "Mad Men"; *Blake Eskin* on the man inside Big Bird. / Our new Cartoon Kit, the caption contest, and animated cartoons. / A complete archive of issues, back to 1925.

THE MAIL

DEBATING DRONES

Jane Mayer’s article on the assassination program using Predator drones in Pakistan was welcome and long overdue (“The Predator War,” October 26th). There is an interesting parallel to be drawn between the development of the U.A.V. (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) and the gradual adoption of mechanized warfare between the First and Second World Wars. The early proponents of the tank were an eccentric lot, as described by Patrick Wright in his excellent “Tank.” Many of them were idealists, motivated by a desire to avoid the slaughter of the static trench warfare of the First World War. The actual outcome in the Second World War was far from ideal, as mechanized warfare allowed the war to spread rapidly all over Europe, involving the general population far more than ever before and resulting in many more deaths. The U.A.V. has some of the same ostensible attraction, seemingly offering the ability to carry out “surgical” strikes at little or no risk to one’s own soldiers, hence encouraging politicians to pursue continuous warfare. As with tanks and aerial warfare in the Second World War, though, the U.A.V.s just spread the war more widely, killing more innocents, even in the most remote places.

Nick Cunningham
London, England

Mayer’s excellent survey of the C.I.A.’s covert campaign of unmanned drone strikes in Pakistan raises the important issue of how to insure accountability for covert actions. It is absurd for the Obama Administration to maintain the fiction that the Predator program is a secret: there have been around ninety missile attacks over the past five years, with operational details revealed in American and Pakistani newspapers; after one strike in December, 2005, villagers uncovered shrapnel bearing the designation “AGM-114,” the words “guided missile,” and the initials “U.S.” In one of his first executive orders, President Obama declared that “the government should not keep information confidential merely because public officials might be embarrassed by disclosure, because errors and failures might be revealed, or because of speculative or abstract fears.” Step one toward meeting this objective would be to acknowledge what is readily apparent and explain how such a campaign fits within U.S. foreign policy, rather than having anonymous officials issue leaks praising the program as an unqualified success.

Micah Zenko
Fellow, Center for Preventive Action
Council on Foreign Relations
New York City

SWING TIME

Sasha Frere-Jones writes that New Orleans bounce and New York hip-hop traditionally “swing and syncopate,” while European pulses are “simpler and faster,” and that hip-hop is now transitioning away from its “blues-based swing” (Pop Music, October 26th). Swing is not an emotion, a style, or an approach. It is, at a technical level, the delaying of certain notes to create a rhythmic effect. Things can swing “hard” if that delay is substantial, or “shuffle” subtly if the delay is more minimal. The truth is that hip-hop has had straight and swung beats since its inception (for classic hip-hop songs that employ “straighter” rhythms, listen to Run-D.M.C.’s “You Be Illin’ ” or Masta Ace’s “Born to Roll”). In a parallel way, European electronic genres have made extensive use of swing throughout their history, especially in the realms of house, garage, and 2-step. I agree with Sasha Frere-Jones that hip-hop has changed over time, but perhaps not in the way that he suggests.

Rafael Loiederman
Los Angeles, Calif.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer’s name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

“BRAVO, de SÈVES!”

—MAURICE SENDAK, AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR OF *WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE*

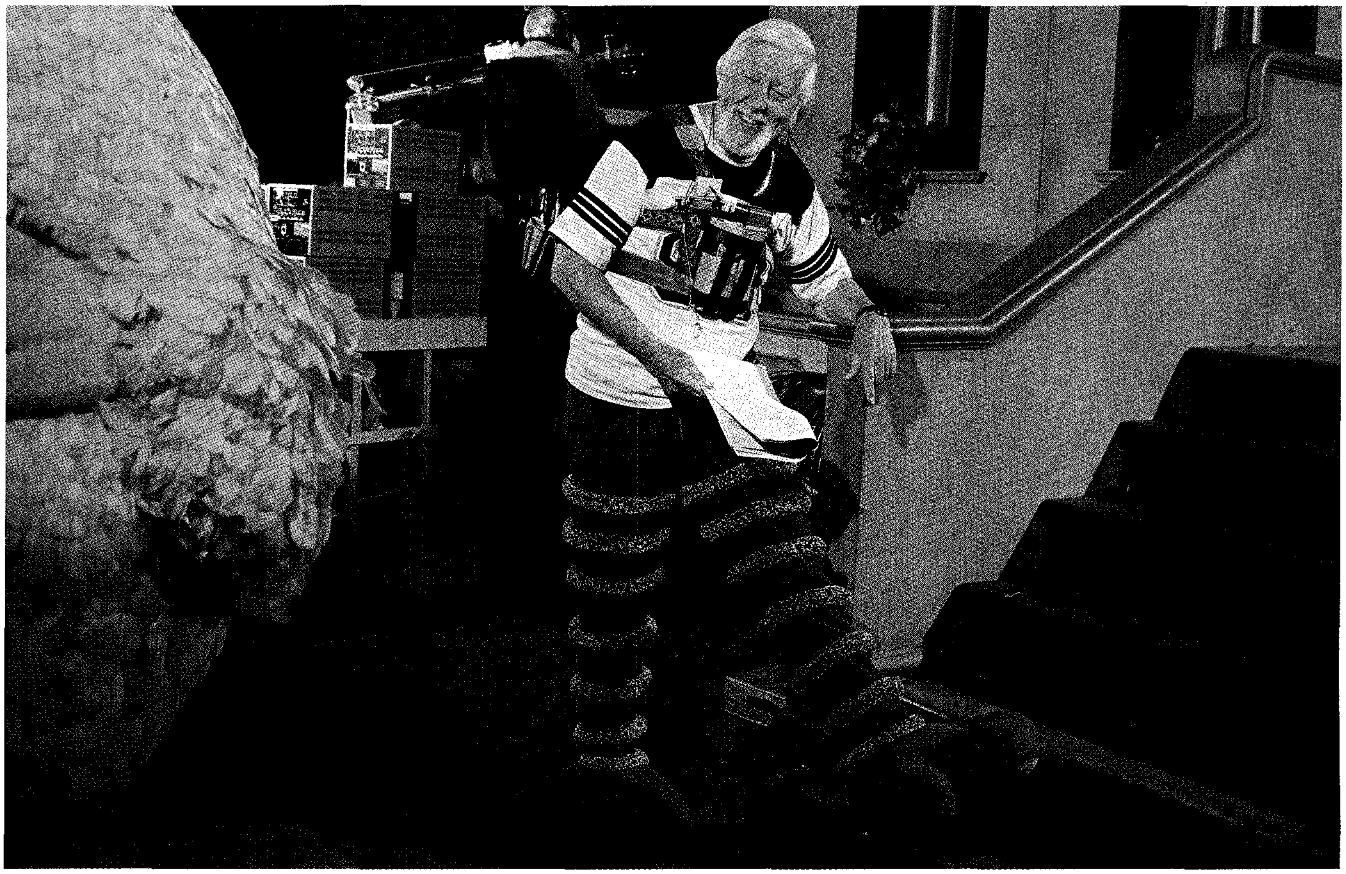
Randall de Sève
Peter de Sève
THE Duchess of Whimsy
An Absolutely Delicious Fairy Tale

THE DUCHESS OF WHIMSY
BY
RANDALL de SÈVE
ILLUSTRATED BY
PETER de SÈVE

“THE PAGES ARE AT TURNS LUSH AND SPARE, REVEALING LAYER AFTER LAYER OF SURPRISES.”
—FRANÇOISE MOULY, ART EDITOR, *THE NEW YORKER;* EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, TOON BOOKS

IN BOOKSTORES NOW

PHILOMEL BOOKS
A DIVISION OF PENGUIN YOUNG READERS GROUP
WWW.PENGUIN.COM/YOUNGREADERS



Caroll Spinney, of "Sesame Street," which is celebrating its fortieth anniversary. Photograph by Brian Finke.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
15	16	17	11	12	13	14

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
MAMET MANIA

David Mamet directs the world première of his new play, "Race," at the Barrymore. James Spader, David Alan Grier, Kerry Washington, and Richard Thomas star in the drama, the fourth Mamet show in New York this season. (See page 6.)

NIGHT LIFE
STRANGE TRIPS

The critic Robert Palmer, who died in 1997, praised all kinds of artists—from obscure blues singers to famous rockers—but his favorite band was from Morocco. He first saw the Sufi Master Musicians in 1971, in their home village of Jajouka, and recently his daughter Augusta made a documentary, "The Hand of Fatima," retracing his steps. At (Le) Poisson Rouge, the guitarist Lenny Kaye, Bachir Attar (the son of the group's founder), and others pay tribute to Palmer. (See pages 8 and 14.)

ART
CLOTH BOUND

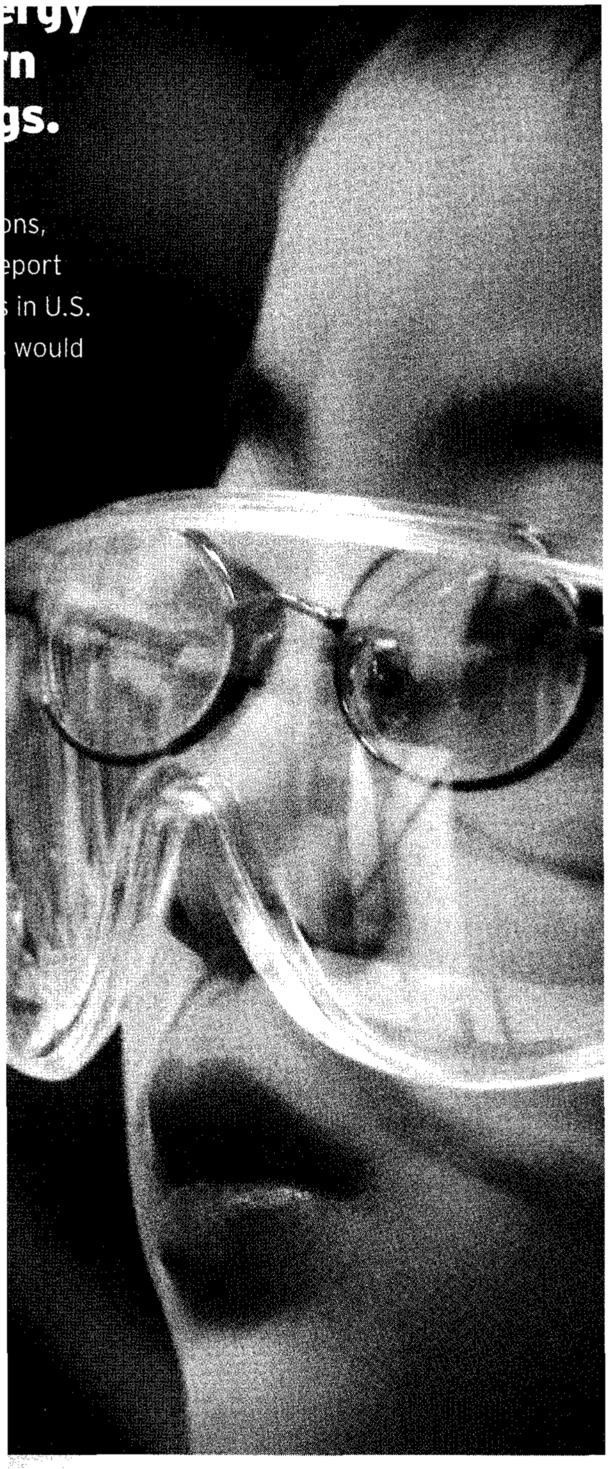
"Traveling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World," at the American Museum of Natural History, takes visitors on a six-century tour (from 600 to 1200 A.D.) of the trade routes connecting the outer reaches of China to the Mediterranean, and includes a live display of spinning silkworms and a working model of a Persian astrolabe. (See page 9.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
HOWELLS' EVE

The Anglican Church is in turmoil, but its music retains its serene magnificence. In back-to-back concerts, the choirs of St. Thomas Church and the (Catholic) Church of St. Ignatius Loyola offer works by Handel, Purcell, and the modern master Herbert Howells. (See page 12.)

MOVIES
EAST WINDS

The director Tsai Ming-Liang, who was born in Malaysia and is based in Taiwan, captures the rootlessness and solitude of globalized migration. The Asia Society's mini-retrospective features his first film, "Rebels of the Neon God," and a première screening of his latest film, "Face." (See page 17.)


ergy
rn
gs.
ons,
eport
in U.S.
would

Chevron
Human

onary uses of energy in the U.S. only. All data from
ered trademarks of Chevron Intellectual Property

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
TESTING THEIR METAL

So you've adjusted to the new music economy. You know the big acts have little to gain from making the album of their lives, because only a few of their fans will actually buy it, and most of them will listen to it on terrible-sounding earphones anyway. The money and the passion previously reserved for albums are being redirected into touring. U2 is travelling with a stage set that takes two days to dismantle and pack up. God bless the big guys for bringing the big toys—sports arenas and concrete tubs are not often a friend to the sonic arts. So when Metallica comes to town, go. They've been perfecting the art of loud for years. Like Nine Inch Nails and other scientists interested in splitting the ear, Metallica knows the secret is in the low midrange and not in overdriving gear that can't be overdriven. I haven't cared for a Metallica album in years, but the band can still make a stadium rumble. At Madison Square Garden on Nov. 14-15, their music won't sound like it's ricocheting around in a toilet. It will sound like metal, not concrete.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

THE AGE OF IRON
To kick off the Classic Stage Company season, Brian Kulick adapts and directs a mashup of Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida" and Thomas Heywood's "Iron Age." In previews. (136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

BRITS OFF BROADWAY
The annual festival includes Matt Wilkinson's "Red Sea Fish," directed by Franklyn McCabe; "Wolves at the Window," by Toby Davies, directed by Thomas Hescott, which opens Nov. 15; and, in previews, "My Wonderful Day," written and directed by Alan Ayckbourn. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS
Tarell Alvin McCraney premières a trilogy of stories centered on an extended family living in the bayou. Produced in association with the McCarter Theatre. Tina Landau directs "Part 1: In the Red and Brown Water"; Robert O'Hara directs "Part 2: The Brothers Size" and "Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet." In previews. Opens Nov. 17. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

DREAMGIRLS
The Apollo Theatre is the first stop on a national tour of this revival of the 1981 musical, about the rise of an all-girl singing group from Chicago in the sixties. With music by Henry Krieger and a book and lyrics by Tom Eyen; Robert Longbottom choreographs and directs. In previews. (253 W. 125th St. 212-307-4100.)

FELA!
Bill T. Jones directs and choreographs this musical about Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the activist musician who pioneered Afro-beat. With a book by Jim Lewis and Jones; music performed onstage by members of Antibalas. In previews. (O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER
Rebecca Gilman wrote this play, based on the novel by Carson McCullers, in which an itinerant deaf loner ends up in a small Southern town during the Depression. Doug Hughes directs. Previews begin Nov. 13. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

IN THE NEXT ROOM OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY
Les Waters directs Sarah Ruhl's Broadway début, a comedy about marriage, starring Laura Benanti and Michael Cerveris. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

IRVING BERLIN'S WHITE CHRISTMAS
Walter Bobbie directs a musical version of the 1954 film, in a return limited holiday engagement. Opens Nov. 13. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN
The Actors Company Theatre puts on Sidney Howard's 1930 comedy, in which a country doctor holds a stash of valuable paintings. In previews. Opens Nov. 11. (Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE ORPHANS' HOME CYCLE: PART I
Hallie Foote leads the ensemble performing Horton Foote's play cycle, comprising nine works shown in three parts, produced by Signature Theatre Company and Hartford Stage. Michael Wilson directs. In previews. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-352-3101.)

PETER AND THE WOLF
Brian Blessed narrates Prokofiev's 1936 masterpiece, performed with a new prequel composition by Philip Feeney. Opens Nov. 13. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010.)

POST NO BILLS
The Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre presents a new drama by Mando Alvarado, about an aspiring singer-songwriter who moves to a big city and becomes involved with a pair of street musicians. In previews. (224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

RACE
David Mamet directs the world première of his new play, starring James Spader, David Alan Grier, Kerry Washington, and Richard Thomas. Previews begin Nov. 16. (Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

RAGTIME
Marcia Milgrom Dodge directs and choreographs the 1998 musical, based on the book by E. L. Doctorow, about life in New York City at the turn of the twentieth century. With a book by Terrence McNally and music and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. In previews. Opens Nov. 15. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.)

SHOLOM ALEICHEM: LAUGHTER THROUGH TEARS
Folksbiene presents a play written by and starring Theodore Bikel, about Sholom Aleichem, who wrote the Tevye stories from which "Fiddler on the Roof" was derived. In previews. (Nagelberg Theatre, Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Ave. 646-312-5073.)

THE STARRY MESSENGER
Kenneth Lonergan wrote and directs this drama for the New Group, starring Matthew Broderick as a divorced teacher at a planetarium and Catalina Sandino Moreno ("Maria Full of Grace") as the single mother he falls in love with. In previews. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

TALK LIKE SINGING
An original Japanese musical, written and directed by Koki Mitani, about a man who is studied by behavioral specialists because he can communicate only through song, features music by Yasuharu Konishi, of Pizzicato Five. Opens Nov. 13. (Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-352-3101.)

THIS
Julianne Nicholson stars in a new play by Melissa James Gibson, about a widowed failed poet entering her forties who is raising a ten-year-old daughter and starting to date. Directed by Daniel Aukin. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

WORMWOOD
Theatre of the Eighth Day presents a revival of the play it created in 1985, performed by the original Polish cast, about life under martial law. Part of the "Performing Revolution in Central and Eastern Europe" festival. Nov. 11-15. (Abrons Arts Center, 466 Grand St. 212-352-3101.)

YOU BETTER SIT DOWN: TALES FROM MY PARENTS' DIVORCE
The Civilians present a piece based on interviews with their own divorced parents. Anne Kauffman directs. Nov. 13-14. (Galapagos, 16 Main St., at Water St., Brooklyn. 212-868-4444.)

NOW PLAYING

CREATURE
In 1401, Margery (Sofia Jean Gomez), a bawdy young married woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown, has a sudden vision of Jesus Christ that inspires her to try to become a saint. Since she's a loud and outrageous person, though, her new passion, which is expressed by a lot of wailing, grates on her friends and family—especially on her lustful husband, John (Darren Goldstein)—at the same time that it fills a kindhearted local priest (Jeremy Shamos) and a lost young man (Will Rogers) with inspiration. Heidi Schreck's script, directed by Leigh Silverman, though somewhat incoherent, makes religious fanaticism look like a lot of fun. Some wonderful performances, too—in particular, those of Gomez, Goldstein, and Shamos—add to the high energy. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 866-811-4111.)

IDIOT SAVANT
Willem Dafoe stars in the world première of an avant-garde philosophical comedy written and directed by Richard Foreman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

THE LILY'S REVENGE
The performance artist Taylor Mac wrote and stars in this phantasmagorical drag epic, which runs five delirious hours and has a cast of forty. Mac plays a lily (the costumes, by Machine Dazzle, are ingenious) who sets out on a quest to become a man and win the hand of a human bride. Along the way, he encounters a talking curtain, a dream ballet, and a group

KYUNGDUK KIM

of bitchy flowers conducting a haiku slam. The show is breathtakingly ambitious on nearly every level, but at its core it's a progressive allegory about love and matrimony. And it flies by: the multiple intermissions are presided over by the World Famous Bob and feature a Discussion Disco, where theatregoers can chew over lessons they have learned from the flowers. (HERE Arts Center, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101.)

THE NEW ELECTRIC BALLROOM
If Beckett had written "Bye Bye Birdie," it might look something like Enda Walsh's play, directed by Walsh for Druid Theatre, about three sisters in an Irish fishing town. The older two spend most of their time dressing up in hot-pink outfits and reliving memories of an episode, in their teens, when each had a fleeting chance to rendezvous with a rock star. Eventually, they drag a local fishmonger into the act. The story is told through eerie, word-drunk monologues, punctuated by bizarre bits of action (at one point, the fishmonger gets a full-body scrub-down). As committed as the play is to its own eccentricities, it's too emotionally self-contained, leaving the audience as befuddled as the poor fishmonger. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

NIGHTINGALE
Lynn Redgrave spins a tale that moves through the generations of her royal family of actors but centers on the life of her grandmother, Beatrice Kempson. Kempson, beautifully evoked by Redgrave under the direction of Joseph Hardy, was a prudish snob, raised in Victorian England, who married the wrong man for the wrong reasons, showed little or no affection for two of her three children, and died in love with a man she barely knew. The variety of English accents alone that Redgrave employs during this slightly overlong one-woman show would be enough to impress and delight, but it's the seamless way she morphs from being her grandmother, stunned by bitterness, to herself, amused by her own good fortune and chastened by the looming spectre of death, that makes this show unusual and worthwhile. (City Center Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

QUARTETT
Robert Wilson conceived and directs this experimental work by Heiner Muller, inspired by Choderlos de Laclos's "Les Liaisons Dangereuses." With music by Michael Galasso. Isabelle Huppert stars. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Through Nov. 14.)

THE UNDERSTUDY
Kafka on Broadway, complete with Hollywood stars and expensive scenery for them to chew, provides the perfect comic setup in Theresa Rebeck's new play. This is the understudy rehearsal, in which a cocky action hero (Mark-Paul Gosselaar) is learning the lead role alongside an unknown (Justin Kirk) who disdains him; a harried stage manager (Julie White) shepherds them through it. Though the play is undermined by a few flaws, Rebeck's script and the three excellent actors are terrific when the play hits its stride, delivering a clever indictment of contemporary theatre while making the characters' personal circumstances ever more Kafkaesque: they are no more in control of the forces of celebrity, art, money, and Broadway than they are of their own fates. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

Also Playing

AFTER MISS JULIE: American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. **AVENUE Q:** New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BROKE-OLOGY:** Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200. **BYE BYE BIRDIE:** Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. **THE EMPEROR JONES:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **FINIAN'S RAINBOW:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **GOD OF CARNAGE:** Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIR: THE AMERICAN TRIBAL LOVE-ROCK MUSICAL:** Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **HAMLET:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **LET ME DOWN EASY:** Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. **LOVE, LOSS, AND WHAT I WORE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. **MEMPHIS:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **NEXT TO NORMAL:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **ORDINARY DAYS:** Roundabout Underground, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. **OUR TOWN:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-868-4444. **THE ROYAL FAMILY:** Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **A STEADY RAIN:** Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **SUPERIOR DONUTS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **VIGIL:** DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **WISHFUL DRINKING:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Nov. 11: **Ghostface Killah.** Following a long string of critically acclaimed albums as a hardcore rapper, this founding Wu-Tang Clan member returned earlier this year with "Ghostdini: the Wizard of Poetry in Emerald City." Those expecting more of the same were in for a shock, as this latest opus found Ghostface swapping his signature straight-faced narratives for some endearingly prurient escapades as a libidinous R.& B. Lothario. Nov. 13: South meets North as the Atlanta rap kingpins **Goodie Mob** (perhaps best known as the group that spawned the flamboyant Cee-Lo, who jumped ship to find fame with Gnarls Barkley) and their fellow-Southerner **Scarface** join the Bronx-based hip-hop legend **Slick Rick.**

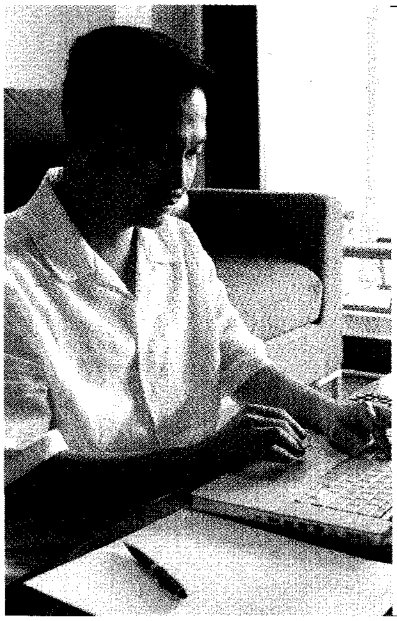
BEACON THEATRE
Broadway at 74th St. (800-745-3000)—Nov. 16: The celebrated singer-songwriter and part-time New Pornographers vocalist **Neko Case** may be most renowned for her moodily atmospheric take on alternative country, but her most recent album, "Middle Cyclone," finds the sultry siren branching out into more Technicolor territory. It has a decidedly hook-laden sensibility, which is not to say that she's lost her earthy approach (it was recorded in a barn and closes with a thirty-minute field recording of crickets).

THE BELL HOUSE
149 7th St., between Second and Third Aves., Brooklyn (718-643-6510)—Members of classic D.C. acts like Velocity Girl and Black Tambourine founded Slumberland Records in 1989 to carve out a home for indie-pop acts operating on the underground punk circuit. Twenty years and eighty-odd releases later, the label continues to be a prescient indie-rock signpost. On Nov. 14, it celebrates its twentieth anniversary with reunions by **Lorelei, Nord Express,** and the **Ropers.** The **Pains of Being Pure at Heart, Crystal Stilts, Pants Yell!,** and **Frankie Rose and the Outs** will be on hand as well, attesting to the label's firm hand in the current pop landscape.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Nov. 17-18: The remarkable Los Angeles-based collective **Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeros** is known for its circus-like live shows and trippy sound.

BROOKLYN BOWL
61 Wythe Ave., Williamsburg (718-963-3369)—Nov. 13: The brash, cheeky, and utterly endearing British band **Art Brut.**

FILLMORE NEW YORK AT IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Nov. 11-17: One of this year's most surprising and welcome reunions is that of the seminal alternative act the **Jesus Lizard.** In the early nineties, the band released masterworks of industrial-tinged pounding, produced by the underground hero Steve Albini. The band's frenzied and volatile guitar rock was only outdone by the sadistic live antics of its front man, David Yow. Their reunion is a time capsule of Gen X anx-



The Citi® View: On Time, Every Time

Paying a late fee is something everyone wants to avoid. With the Citibank® Online Bill Payment Promise, if your payment doesn't get there when scheduled, you're covered. Because it's our view that peace of mind is something you can't put a price on. **Learn more at www.citi.com/view**

Citi never sleeps®

citi®

© 2009 Citigroup Inc. Citibank, N.A. Member FDIC. Citi, Citi with Arc Design and Citi never sleeps are registered service marks of Citigroup Inc.

iety and angst, and comes complete with reissues of their material released on Touch and Go Records.

GLASSLANDS GALLERY
289 Kent Ave., between S. 1st and S. 2nd Sts., Brooklyn (No phone)—Nov. 15: With two releases on Thurston Moore's label Ecstatic Peace!, the psych-garage monsters **Awesome Color** serve up hulking slabs of Motor City proto-punk. Their renowned live show works best in smaller venues, so elbow your way up to the upper balcony and watch this visionary power trio kick out the jams. With the slow-burning underground folk of their label mates **Glass Rock,** a new band featuring members of Tall Firs and Soft Location.

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (877-598-8694)—Nov. 11 and Nov. 13-14: **Dir En Grey** is an enigmatic Japanese heavy-metal band that specializes in stylistic alchemy. The band meshes futuristic, theatrical pop with frenetically grinding guitar noise. While the ensemble's more recent albums have reined in the ferocity a bit, their music remains experimental.

GRAND BALLROOM
Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (800-745-3000)—Nov. 12: The Chicago-based reissue record label Numero Group was founded six years ago with the mission of bringing back from the vaults forgotten and obscure pop and soul gems. On Nov. 18, it rolls into town with three of its acts, **Syl Johnson** (perhaps best known for his 1970 single "Is It Because I'm Black?," and the later use and abuse of his songs by contemporary rappers), **Renaldo Domino** (who was born Renaldo Jones, but had a voice so sweet that his friends looked to a sugar company for a nickname), and the long-under-the-radar quartet the **Notations.** All the acts will be backed by the grooving dynamos in **JC Brooks & the Uptown Sound,** a ten-member-strong band. The local hip-hop legend **MC Missy Dee,** who was present at the genre's birth, in the seventies, will make her first local appearance since Jimmy Carter was in the Oval Office.

KNITTING FACTORY
361 Metropolitan Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (347-529-6696)—Nov. 14: **Gordon Gano** and the **Ryans.** In the early eighties, Gano and his band the Violent Femmes (which were not really either) emerged out of Milwaukee with a punk-folk sound that helped define the nascent indie movement. Since then, Gano has teamed up with the Ryan brothers, Brendan and Billy, who headed the Bogmen and have recently been composing film scores (including those for "Fever Pitch" and "The Heartbreak Kid"). It's a fruitful collaboration, and their album, "Under the Sun," is full of arresting songs.

"LET'S ZYDECO"
The concert series dedicated to Louisiana's various indigenous musical forms has arranged for the return of **Rosie Ledet,** a young female accordionist and bandleader, who is a rarity in the male-dominated zydeco world. She's at Connolly's with her band, the **Zydeco Playboys,** on Nov. 15. (121 W. 45th St. For more information, call 212-685-7597 or visit www.letszydeco.com.)

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG
66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Nov. 13: The Numero Group's "Eccentric Soul Revue," with **Syl Johnson, Renaldo Domino,** the **Notations,** and **Missy Dee.** (See the Grand Ballroom.)

(LE) POISSON ROUGE
158 Bleecker St. (212-505-3474)—In 1971, to write about the album "Brian Jones Presents the Pipes of Pan at Joujouka," the late critic and musician Robert Palmer headed to the Moroccan village of the Sufi band that had so enthralled the Rolling Stones guitarist as well as a cadre of Beat writers (William S. Burroughs famously called them "the world's only 4,000-year-old rock band"). In 2006, Palmer's daughter Augusta, a filmmaker, retraced his steps, and she has recently released a documentary, "The Hand of Fatima," based on that journey. On Nov. 16, **Lenny Kaye,** the **Kropotkins,** and other musicians pay tribute to Palmer at a concert benefitting the Master Musicians themselves. There will also be readings by **Ned Sublette, Vivien Goldman,** and **Anthony DeCurtis,** who edited the new collection "Blues & Chaos: The Music Writing of Robert Palmer." Augusta, and **Bachir Attar,** the son of the band's founder and its current leader, will also be on hand. (See Movies.)

SANTOS PARTY HOUSE
96 Lafayette St. (212-584-5492)—Nov. 17: Victor Vasquez and Himanshu Suri, who together comprise the hip-hop duo **Das Racist,** inspire almost as much derision as enthusiasm for their blend of smart-aleck rhymes and absurdist wordplay. They had a minor hit last summer with "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell," in which the names of the fast-food chains serve as both a chorus and a punch line. They will be joined by the electro-hop duo **ApSci,** as well as **Maggie Horn** and **Cubic Zirconia.**

Oferta
Punto de Venta
IR INIT

Alex Webb's photograph "Santiago, Cuba, 2008," at Ricco/Maresca, in Chelsea.

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Nov. 13: The Portuguese vocalist **Sara Tavares.** (Zankel Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Nov. 10-14: **Jim Hall,** who recently disentangled himself from significant medical issues and has returned to performing, defines the essence of lyrical jazz guitar. He has a fruitful history with the members of his quartet, the saxophonist **Greg Osby,** the bassist **Steve LaSpina,** and the drummer **Joey Baron.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Nov. 10-15: **Wingspan** features the pianist and leader **Mulgrew Miller** alongside such fierce soloists as the vibraphonist **Steve Nelson. Antonio Hart** will step in for the saxophonist Steve Wilson at this engagement.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Nov. 12-13: **Mose Allison,** a composer of memorably caustic songs, an idiosyncratic pianist, and a sly singer, has been a sui-generis presence on the jazz scene for some fifty years. His longevity hasn't tempered his wit or his musical sharpness. Nov. 14-15: The **Heath Brothers** quartet. The bassist Percy Heath may be gone, but his masterly siblings, the saxophonist Jimmy and the drummer Albert, continue playing. On their latest album, "Endurance," **David Wong** holds down the bass slot, and **Jeb Patton** plays the piano. They join the brothers here.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Nov. 13-14, in the Rose Theatre: The **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** with **Wynton Marsalis,** along with the pianists **Geri Allen** and **Geoffrey Keezer,** salute the centennial of Mary Lou Williams, a visionary pianist and composer who straddled the swing, bop, and post-bop eras, and is still not as familiar a figure as she deserves to be. Nov. 13-14: The saxophonist **Maceo Parker,** who makes his Allen Room début with this gig, still has much of the funk and flavor that he had when he played with James Brown, and later George Clinton. (Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500.)

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Nov. 12-15: The Chilean vocalist **Claudia Acuña** refracts standards and Latin material through a contemporary prism.

PUPPET'S JAZZ BAR
481 Fifth Ave., between 11th and 12th Sts., Brooklyn (718-499-2622)—The trumpeter **John McNeil's** weekly Wednesday-night engagement features his exceptional freebop quartet, a two-horn, pianoless unit manned by vibrant younger players, each ripe for greater acclaim. Keyboard fans should consider arriving early: **Arturo O'Farrill** typically plays solo piano beforehand.

SMALLS
183 W. 10th St. (212-252-5091)—For a saxophonist, getting backed by just a bass and drum is a demanding setup. On Nov. 14, two fine stylists meet the challenge: **Ralph Lalama** during the early sets, followed by **Marcus Strickland.** Nov. 16-18: In his regular group, the Bad Plus, the pianist **Ethan Iverson** favors quirky originals and spirited covers of modern pop songs that give him room to engage his deconstructionist impulses. With his trio, featuring the bassist **Ben Street** and the veteran drummer **Albert (Tootie) Heath,** Iverson turns his angular style on bebop and standards.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Nov. 10-15: **Christian McBride.** With his Inside Straight band, the brilliant and versatile bassist favors a mainstream approach, a role he takes to with brio. His bop-inclined partners include the saxophonist **Steve Wilson,** the pianist **Peter Martin,** and the vibraphonist **Warren Wolf.**

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"The 'Young Archer,' Attributed to Michelangelo."** Ongoing. ♦ **"Vermeer's Masterpiece 'The Milkmaid.'"** Through Nov. 29. ♦ **"Art of the Samurai: Japanese Arms and Armor, 1156-1868."** The steel blades that line the walls of this dazzling show, like so many minimalist monuments to war, underscore the violence at the core of the samurai ethos. But it's easy to separate blood from beauty in the presence of so many

mind-bogglingly fine objects. Wall labels offer historical shading: the years between 1185 and 1392 were so conflict-ridden they gave rise to three new Buddhist sects and two new schools of meditation. Some levity arrives in the form of helmets, from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, shaped like an acorn, a dragonfly, an open clamshell, a mantis, and even Mt. Fuji. The pièce de résistance, perhaps, is a sixteenth-century headpiece with antler-like crests that suggests a fearsome hybrid of Darth Vader and a battle-ready elk. Through Jan. 10. ♦ **"Looking In: Robert Frank's 'The Americans.'"** Through Jan. 3. ♦ **"American Stories: Paintings of Everyday Life, 1765-1915."** Through Jan. 24. ♦ **"Watteau, Music, and Theater."** Through Nov. 29. ♦ **"Eccentric Visions: The World of Luo Ping (1733-1799)."** Through Jan. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity."** Through Jan. 25. ♦ **"Monet's Water Lilies."** Through April 12. ♦ **"New Photography 2009: Walead Beshty, Daniel Gordon, Leslie Hewitt, Carter Mull, Sterling Ruby, Sara VanDerBeek."** Through Jan. 11. ♦ **"Projects 91: Artur Zmijewski."** Through Feb. 1. ♦ **"Paul Sietsema."** Through Feb. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Kandinsky."** Through Jan. 13. ♦ **"Anish Kapoor: Memory."** The British sculptor gives Richard Serra and James Turrell a run for their phenomenological money in his astounding Corten-steel behemoth lodged in a modest-sized gallery on the museum's second floor. Its sectional, curved volume is simultaneously a part and its whole: there is no vantage point from which to encounter "Memory" in its entirety. From one view, visitors confront the rusted twenty-four-ton hulk as both art and obstacle. Another view, in a dimly lit room, opens onto a pitch-black, seemingly infinite void. It's the inside of the sculpture, but the experience is so exquisitely disembodied that time stops and form becomes immaterial. Through March 28. ♦ **"Paired, Gold: Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Roni Horn."** Through Jan. 6. ♦ **"Intervals: Kitty Kraus."** Through Jan. 6. (Open Fridays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Saturday evenings until 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—**"Roni Horn aka Roni Horn."** Through June 13. ♦ **"Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstraction."** Through Jan. 17. ♦ **"Steve Wolfe on Paper."** Through Nov. 29. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Who Shot Rock & Roll: A Photographic History, 1955 to the Present."** The curator Gail Buckland has put together a big, vivid survey of the photographers who documented the rock scene that is as intelligent as it is entertaining. Stars—from Elvis and Little Richard to Eminem and Björk—are essential to the show's success, but Buckland gives her keenest attention to the people who helped make them famous. It's her eye for great photographs that makes this much more than a stroll through the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Without overlooking iconic images (like Pennie Smith's shot of the Clash's Paul Simonon smashing his guitar) and big-name photographers (Avedon, Arbus, Leibovitz, Gursky), she gathers a slew of hard-core rock pros (including Smith, Bob Gruen, Baron Wolman, Jim Marshall, and Lynn Goldsmith) and showcases their most interesting work. Through Jan 31. ♦ **"James Tissot: 'The Life of Christ.'"** Through Jan. 17. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Traveling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World."** Opens Nov. 14. ♦ **"Extreme Mammals: The Biggest, Smallest, and Most Amazing Mammals of All Time."** Through Jan. 3. ♦ **"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter."** Through May 31. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"Design USA: Contemporary Innovation."** Through April 4. ♦ **"Design for a Living World."** Through Jan. 4. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10 to 5, Fridays, 10 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, noon to 6.)

DIA AT THE HISPANIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Audubon Terrace, Broadway at 155th St. (212-926-2234)—**"Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster: Chronotopes & Dioramas."** Through April 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:30, and Sundays, 1 to 4.)

FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"Watteau to Degas: French Drawings from the Frits Lugt Collection."** Through Jan. 10. ♦ **"Exuberant Grotesques: Renaissance Maiolica from the Fontana Workshop."** Through Jan. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

JAPAN SOCIETY

333 E. 47th St. (212-752-3015)—**"Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design."** Through Jan. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 11 to 6, Fridays, 11 to 9, and weekends, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Alias Man Ray: The Art of Reinvention."** Opens Nov. 15. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Fridays, 11 to 4.)

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"A Woman's Wit: Jane Austen's Life and Legacy."** Through March 14. ♦ **"William Blake's World: 'A New Heaven Is Begun.'"** Through Jan. 3. ♦ **"Rococo and Revolution: Eighteenth-Century French Drawings."** Through Jan. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO

Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—**"Voces y Visiones: Four Decades Through El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection."** Through Feb. 28. ♦ **"Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis."** Through Feb. 28. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

NEUE GALERIE

1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"From Klimt to Klee: Masterworks from the Serge Sabarsky Collection."** Through Feb. 15. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM

235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—**"Urs Fischer: Marguerite de Ponty."** Through Feb. 7. (Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"1969."** Through April 5. ♦ **"Between Spaces."** Through April 5. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART

Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Duke Riley: Those About to Die Salute You."** Through March 13. ♦ **"O Zhang: Cutting the Blaze to New Frontiers."** Through March 13. ♦ **"Daniel Bozhkov: Republic of Perpetual Reconstitution and Rebuild."** Through March 13. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, noon to 5.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—**"The Red Book of C. G. Jung."** Through Jan. 25. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, 11 to 5, Wednesdays, 11 to 7, Fridays, 11 to 10, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

SCULPTURECENTER

44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—**"A Voyage of Growth and Discovery: Mike Kelley and Michael Smith."** Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"In Practice Fall 2009."** Through Nov. 29. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

The Citi® View: Keeping in Touch

These days, it's hard to imagine life without a cell phone. That's why Citibank is offering Citi Mobile® for your mobile or iPhone® device. That way, you can check your balance or make payments on the go. Because it's our view that everyday banking belongs on your everyday device.

Learn more at www.citi.com/view

Citi never sleeps®

citi®

© 2009 Citigroup Inc. Citibank, N.A. Member FDIC. Citi, Citi with Arc Design, Citi never sleeps and Citi Mobile are registered service marks of Citigroup Inc. iPhone is a registered service mark of Apple Inc.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE ROAD TO RUIN

The best way to think of "Detour," which shows at BAM on Nov. 16, is as a kind of anti-"Cleopatra." Instead of hiring a cast of thousands and spending millions on an endless shoot, do what the director Edgar G. Ulmer did in 1945: restrict your action to a few rooms, a gas station, and a car; limit yourself to three and a half main characters; and wrap the whole thing up in six days. (Rumor even has it that the car was Ulmer's own.) The budget was what major studios would call petty cash, but then the script describes a ten-dollar bill as a piece of paper crawling with germs, so who's complaining? Within these confines, Ulmer builds a parable of implacable fate, and of lives so paltry and pinched that a change of identity feels like a smart idea. Our dumb hero (Tom Neal) is a pianist who hitches from east to west in search of one woman but trips over another—a wildcat, played by the aptly named Ann Savage, who knows his dirty secret. The running time is just sixty-seven minutes; any more head to this steam, and the movie might explode.

—Anthony Lane

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"30 Seconds off an Inch."** Opens Nov. 12. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

EMILIE CLARK
The artist continues her conceptual game of collecting collectors, making art about specimen-gathering naturalists from the nineteenth century (the self-taught American botanist Mary Treat, the Irish scientist Mary Ward). This time, Clark's quarry is Martha Maxwell, a rootin' tootin' Colorado taxidermist who bagged her own specimens and, notoriously, constructed a cave featuring her prey, where she lived during Philadelphia's 1876 World's Fair. Clark's homage to Maxwell's tour de force is a sculptural installation of toy stuffed animals; heavy on the Mike Kelley, it falls flat. But Clark shines in graceful watercolors and ambitious canvases. Abstraction and figuration become indistinguishable. Beauty is balanced by provocation. Painting becomes an ongoing experiment in mutation and hybridized form. Through Nov. 21. (Morgan Lehman, 317 Tenth Ave., at 28th St. 212-268-6699.)

DANIEL GORDON
The young artist, whose pictures of collaged constructions are in MOMA's "New Photography," shows earlier work here, some of which was made while he was still an undergraduate at Bard. The pictures are modest in scale and most appear, at first glance, to be rural landscapes: lush green fields, hills covered with wildflowers, a grassy lot patched with snow. But each also depicts a figure suspended *in midair—it's Gordon himself, attempting to fly* like Superman. Shirtless and in long johns, the artist is a diver prepared for a belly flop, but for this frozen moment he's in a state of ecstatic abandon, and we're right there with him. In a few particularly lovely pictures, Gordon is no more than a tiny speck on the distant horizon, no bigger than a fly. Through Nov. 14. (Koenig Projekte, 541 W. 23rd St. 212-334-9255.)

JOSH GOSFIELD
Best known as a designer and illustrator, Gosfield turns to a broad range of photo-based iconography (album and magazine covers, tabloid spreads, posters) for this savvy, engaging show. His subject is the entirely fictitious, but utterly believable, Gigi Gaston, a sixties French singing star whose meteoric, scandalous career is described in painstakingly authentic artifacts and museum-style labels quoting everyone from Jean Genet to Janis Joplin. With a pop connoisseur's attention to period detail, Gosfield concocts a novel by Françoise Sagan, a *Harper's Bazaar* cover by Richard Avedon, and a music video by Jean-Luc Godard, complete with publicity stills. Pop history meets fan fantasy, with hilarious results. Through Nov. 25. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

SARAH MORRIS
Square, pebbly, shiny hard-edged abstractions of overlapping bands, in unemotional bright colors, suggest chopped fragments of layouts that are coextensive with the universe. "You're in this system," Morris has said of her meta-message. She seems to take glee in dehumanization, which radiates from her masterpiece so far: "Beijing," a staggeringly gorgeous, inexorably coldhearted wide-screen film of and about the booming Chinese capital during the 2008 Olympics. That work will leave you aesthetically sated and, perhaps, in a mood to lie down and die. Through Dec. 5. (Petzel, 537 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467.)

MARIAH ROBERTSON
In an age of flawless digital output, Robertson goes into the darkroom to produce large, messy photographs that mix geometric patterns, passages of pure abstraction, and recognizable subjects (palm fronds, book covers, male nudes). The mood is hectic, expressionist, and spontaneous—the rush of images and impressions feels like a psychedelic light show compressed onto a shard of paper. Because Robertson tends to leave her borders uneven, many pieces look like fragments of larger work, but they never feel slight or incomplete. The anything-goes spirit of chance and random juxtapositions is anchored in a sensibility that knows exactly how far to go. Through Nov. 14. (Marvelli, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-3363.)

Short List

ANDREA BOWERS: Kreps, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849. Through Dec. 5. **PAUL CHAN:** Greene Naftali, 508 W. 26th St. 212-463-7770. Through Dec. 5. **CARROLL DUNHAM:** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300. Through Dec. 5. **PETER FISCHLI AND DAVID WEISS:** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200. Through Jan. 16. **DAN FLAVIN:** Zwirner, 533 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Dec. 23. **WALTON FORD:** Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 212-563-4474. Opens Nov. 12. **WAYNE GONZALES:** Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through Dec. 18. **DAVID HOCKNEY:** Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000. Through Dec. 24. **MICHAEL JOO:** Kern, 532 W. 20th St. 212-367-9663. Through Dec. 5. **MIKE KELLEY:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through Dec. 23. **SISTER CORITA KENT:** Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700. Through Dec. 5. **WALID RAAD:** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through Dec. 12. **MATTHEW RITCHIE:** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Through Dec. 2. **PETER SACKS:** Rodgers/9W, 529 W. 20th St. 212-414-9810. Through Dec. 12. **RICHARD SERRA:** Gagosian, 522 W. 21st St. 212-741-1717. Through Dec. 23. **SIMON STARLING:** Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335. Through Dec. 19. **ALEX WEBB AND REBECCA NORRIS WEBB:** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-4819. Through Jan. 2. **"BESIDES, WITH, AGAINST, AND YET: ABSTRACTION AND THE READY-MADE GESTURE":** The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11. Opens Nov. 13. **"CAVE PAINTING":** Gresham's Ghost, 511 W. 25th St. No phone. Through Dec. 4. **"ON TOP OF THE WHALE":** Algus, 511 W. 25th St. 212-242-6242. Through Dec. 5.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JULIA GOLDMAN
A standout in the gallery's summer show of more or less figurative painters, Goldman goes solo with seven canvases that run the gamut from promising to coy. The best are small portraits of girls' heads that temper an air of improvisation with a stubborn insistence on the materiality of paint (the spirit of David Park looms large). A painting of a brick wall is so dumb it's endearing; Goldman's gifts as a colorist don't hurt. It's a tender meditation on that workhorse of modernism the grid, with a palimpsest surface—built up, scraped down, smeared à la Richter—in whites and terra-cottas opening into an aurora of pink, amethyst, yellow, and blue. Through Nov. 14. (Museum 52, at 4 E. 2nd St. 347-789-7072.)

BERND RIBBECK
The German painter makes his U.S. solo début with deceptively modest geometric abstractions, hybrids of drawing and painting that match the concentrated visual hum and esoteric allure of tantric mandalas with modernism's reverence for unalloyed form. With their contused palette of blood-red, blue-black, and purple, the small paintings, made of acrylic, ballpoint, and marker on fiberboard, could be the dark-arts heirs of Emma Kunz's spirographic spiritualism—unfathomable and seductive. Through Nov. 14. (Harris Lieberman, 89 Vandam St. 212-206-1290.)

Short List

BARRY X BALL: Salon 94 Freemans, 1 Freeman Alley. 212-529-7400. Through Dec. 12. **MARCEL BROODTHAERS:** Freeman, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-5154. Through Dec. 23. **TRACEY EMIN:** Lehmann Maupin, 201 Chrystie St. 212-254-0054. Through Dec. 19. **BROCK ENRIGHT:** Beauchene, 21 Orchard St. 212-375-8043. Through

AKIKO KATO

Nov. 29. **R. M. FISCHER:** K.S. Art, 73 Leonard St. 212-219-9918. Through Dec. 19. **KALUP LINZY:** Taxter & Spengemann, 123 E. 12th St. 212-924-0212. Through Dec. 5. **ERIN SHIRREFF:** Cooley, 34 Orchard St. 212-680-0564. Through Dec. 20. **"STUART SHERMAN: NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE":** Participant, Inc., 253 E. Houston St. 212-254-4334. Through Dec. 20.

DANCE

BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY

"Serenade/The Proposition," the first of three pieces that Jones created for the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, this year, anxiously grapples with history. In fits and starts, trying one oblique angle after another, the collage of text—the ideas of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass set next to the banal thoughts of the cast—stages a conflict between skepticism about the great-man theory and the evidence of the existence of great men. Themes accumulate without adding up or chiming, but the materials are rich: deconstructed period clothing, a live score defamiliarizing Civil War songs, striking video, and dancers who look as fantastic in the choreography's noodling moments as in its flashes of arresting force and tender beauty. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Nov. 10-11 at 7:30, Nov. 12-14 at 8, and Nov. 15 at 2.)

TERE O'CONNOR DANCE

The works of Tere O'Connor can seem like digests of all dance, so full are they of every kind of movement, incongruously quilted together for maximum friction of tempo and tone, fussy detail and headlong motion. Paradoxically animated by deadpan affect, familiar gestures come in the kind of ghostly quotes that induce nervous, knowing chuckles. Elsewhere, it's like nothing you've seen before. "Wrought Iron Fog" pushes all of this to new extremes. It's a workout for mind and body. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Nov 10-12 and Nov. 14 at 7:30 and Nov. 13 at 7:30 and 10.)

"MARIA TALLCHIEF IN CONVERSATION WITH EVELYN CISNEROS"

In this filmed conversation—in a free screening as part of the "Words on Dance" series—Maria Tallchief, one of the first great American ballerinas, tells the story of the birth of American ballet through the prism of her own career. (Paley Center for Media, 25 W. 52nd St. 212-621-6886. Nov. 12 at 1.)

CIRKUS CIRKÖR / "INSIDE OUT"

Like Cirque du Soleil, this Swedish troupe combines traditional circus techniques with bits of theatrical thematic overlay. The subtext is the inner workings of the body—the "inside"—as depicted by stylishly designed representations of the heart, the circulatory system, the double helix. The striking costumes suggest a hint of the freak show and burlesque—the Swedes certainly know how to create a mood. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Nov. 12-13 at 7:30, Nov. 14 at 2 and 7:30, and Nov. 15 at 3.)

"BUTOH-KAN MASTERS"

The second week of the CAVE New York Butoh Festival features three programs at Dance New Amsterdam. The Butoh master Ko Murobushi (Nov. 12-13) presents "Quick Silver," a harrowing study in locomotion, performed in silver body paint. Daisuke Yoshimoto (Nov. 14 at 6 and Nov. 15 at 7), who has a wild, intensely physical presence, explores the body as a landscape in flux. Two young practitioners, Mari Osanai and Yuko Kaseki (Nov. 14 at 9 and Nov. 15 at 3), explore the fusion of Butoh techniques with other types of movement, such as modern dance and yoga. (280 Broadway, at Chambers St. 212-625-8369. Nov. 12-13 at 7:30, Nov. 14 at 6 and 9, and Nov. 15 at 3 and 7.)

MARIA HASSABI

"Soloshow" is the second half of a diptych of solos that wrestle austerely with representations of the female body. "Solo," the first part, which premièred in September, found Hassabi shaking and straining as she contorted on a Persian carpet. "Soloshow," part of Performa 09, promises to be more presentational, a corporeal collage of images culled from art history and pop culture. The captivating Hristoula Harakas alternates with the choreographer in the role. (P.S. 122, First Ave. at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Nov. 12 at 8, Nov. 13-14 at 8 and 10, and Nov. 15 at 6.)

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT"

In Danspace Project's semiannual event—for which donations (of food or cash) go to the food-distribution program at St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery—the downtown experimentalist Ursula Eagly and Danspace's own technical director, Enrico D. Wey, explore movement created by academics, lighting designers, and composers. The more politically minded Maura Donohue focusses on the individual working within a larger group, with an eclectic roster that includes the funk master Monstah Black and the downtown postmodernist Eunkyung-kim. (Second Ave. at 10th St. 866-811-4111. Nov. 12-14 at 8.)

CZECHOSLOVAK-AMERICAN MARIONETTE THEATRE

Prague-born Vít Hořejš's specialty is the reinterpretation of great works of the stage with traditional Czech puppets, with a few postmodern flourishes. His intimate production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," performed by sixteen eight-inch marionettes (and three puppeteer-actors) on three tea trays, closes La Mama's "Puppet Series." (74 E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Nov. 12-14 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 2:30. Through Nov. 29.)

JANIS BRENNER & DANCERS

The retrospective program "Five Decades" begins with selections created by Brenner's mentors: a revival of Meredith Monk's 1964 solo "Break" and two solos from Murray Louis's 1978 "Figura." Brenner's own choreography enters the picture with "Guilt," a claustrophobic solo in a cubicle, made in 1985, the inaugural year of her company. Her 1994 quartet "A Matter of Time" follows, and the program's première, "Dancing in Absentia," is an elegy for dancers lost to AIDS set against a slide show of the missing. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-352-3101. Nov. 12-14 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 3.)

"60 X 60 DANCE"

Both a testament to short attention spans and a potentially exhausting, potentially exhilarating reminder of all the artists who toil in obscurity, this free event teams up sixty mainly unknown choreographers with sixty composers to produce sixty one-minute works. The results are presented back to back, as an onstage clock ticks off the seconds. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, 220 Vesey St. 212-945-0505. Nov. 13 at 12:30 and 7.)

TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY

Dia:Beacon opens its spare, stunning spaces to the work of the postmodern master Trisha Brown. The first in a series of performances will be devoted to several task-and-logic-oriented works from the sixties and seventies, made before Brown had even begun to think about the proscenium stage. (3 Beekman St., Beacon, N.Y. 845-440-0100. Nov. 14-15 at 1 and 3.)

DEBORAH HAY / YVONNE RAINER

Sharing the same stage for the first time in a quarter century, works by two sixties radicals maintain the Judson spirit by being unalike. Hay's "If I Sing to You" is a group expansion of her influential solo practice, which attempts to regain a bodily innocence by stripping performers of their social conditioning. To that end, each cast member—Michelle Boulé, Jeanine Durning, and Ros Warby, among others—chooses her own costume and gender signifiers (including facial hair) before each performance. In Rainer's recent piece "Spiraling Down," photos of Sarah Bernhardt, Pelé and his soccer ball, and some of Rainer's own dances merge with texts about aging and technology in a decline-of-the-West scenario for Rainer's late-period regulars—Pat Catterson, Emily Coates, Patricia Hoffbauer, and Sally Silvers. (Baryshnikov Arts Center, 450 W. 37th St. 212-868-4444. Nov. 17 at 7:30. Through Nov. 19.)

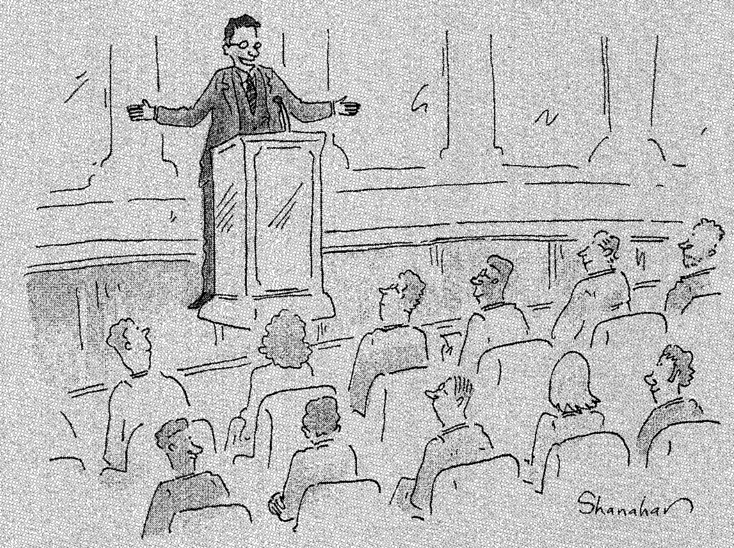
WALLY CARDONA / WC4+

"Really Real" concerns the individual amid the group, at points a much larger group than is usual for Cardona. Phil Kline's score samples from sixties pop an-

Advertisement

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.



" It's simple, really. Business happens in Vegas; I stay in Vegas. "

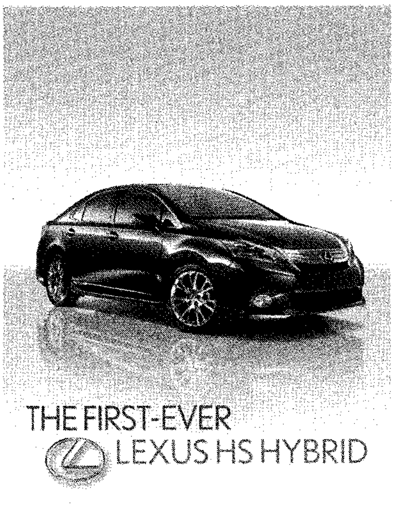
Close the deal and make new opportunities.
Get all the facts at VegasMeansBusiness.com.

ONLY Vegas

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.



VEHICLE SHOWN WITH OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT.

LEXUS ENFORM
with Safety Connect

The pinnacle of convenience and care on the road. Now available on the all-new Lexus HS 250h and other select models. Learn more about Destination Assist and eDestination at **Lexus.com/Enform.**

thems, laying them in directly or reassembling them in ethereal form with the help of the Brooklyn Youth Chorus. The innocence in those voices and the youthful yearning in the lyrics seem to be what Cardona is after, at some painful remove. Sections of the choreography, exposed on a bare stage, take on the ache of adolescent bedrooms, of soloists who might prefer not to be alone. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Nov. 17 at 7:30. Through Nov. 21.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"From the House of the Dead," Janáček's towering final opera, is not exactly a lovely evening at the theatre: it is a free adaptation of Dostoyevsky's novel, which chronicles the daily struggle for existence among the inmates of a tsarist prison camp. What makes it compulsory viewing at the Met—the company's premier production—is the level of talent involved, which includes the singers Peter Mattei and Kurt Streit and two illustrious débutants: the director Patrice Chéreau and the conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. (Nov. 12 and Nov. 16 at 8.) ♦ Robert Lepage's interactive production of **"La Damnation de Faust"** uses fantastical video images (which fluctuate according to the singers' movements and voices), superimposed on a giant scaffold of a set, to inject drama into Berlioz's quasi-operatic oratorio about literature's most famous overachiever. As Méphistophélès shows Faust a life of earthly pleasures, a troupe of twirling dancers and demon acrobats conjures a world of beauty, cynicism, and filth. Ramón Vargas, Olga Borodina, and Ildar Abdrazakov are the work's tireless trio of soloists; the orchestra, under James Conlon, renders the composer's harrowing music with an exacting touch and hurricane-strength force. (Nov. 14 at 1 and Nov. 17 at 8.) ♦ With its uneasy mix of emotional realism and fairy-tale splendor, Puccini's Chinese fable **"Turandot"** is ripe for the full Franco Zeffirelli treatment: his stage-filling designs are never less than dazzling. Lise Lindstrom, a Met newcomer, sings with poised fury in the role of the cool, untouchable princess; the experienced Marcello Giordani, as Calàf, offers rafter-shaking high notes (though not much else) in the famous "Nessun dorma." The conductor Andris Nelsons, making his début, keeps a brittle beat but shapes the big moments effectively. With Marina Poplavskaya as Liù. (Nov. 14 at 8:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Christopher Alden, never a shy director, is at the helm of the season's only new production, **"Don Giovanni"**; the leading role will be seized by Daniel Okulitch, a fine Canadian baritone who gained notoriety for appearing nude in the Los Angeles Opera's misbegotten production of Howard Shore's "The Fly." The promising cast also features Jason Hardy, Stefania Dovhan, Keri Alkema, Joélle Harvey, and Gregory Turay; Gary Thor Wedow conducts. (Nov. 12 and Nov. 14 at 8.) ♦ The salvo of critical praise that greeted the 1993 world première of Hugo Weisgall's Biblical epic **"Esther,"** a thorny but powerful and expertly crafted music drama, raised hopes for a revival, which the company never delivered. Now that's been set aright, with the vivid Lauren Flanigan—City Opera's prima donna—returning to the title role. James Maddalena and Beth Clayton are also featured; George Manahan. (Nov. 13 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 1:30.) (David H. Koch Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

JUILLIARD OPERA CENTER: "ARIODANTE"
City Opera's Gary Thor Wedow conducts the center's production (directed by Stephen Wadsworth) of Handel's attractive opera seria, first staged in London in 1735; the cast includes Cecelia Hall (in the title role) and Shenyang (as the King of Scotland). (Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 212-721-6500. Nov. 11 and Nov. 13 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Xian Zhang, the orchestra's former associate conductor, returns to Avery Fisher Hall to lead her old colleagues in a piquant program consisting of Haydn's Symphony No. 95 in C Minor, Martinů's Piano Concerto No. 4, "Incantation" (a true rarity, with Garrick Ohlsson), and Sibelius's Symphony No. 1 in E Minor. (212-875-5656. Nov. 12 and Nov. 17 at 7:30, Nov. 13 at 11 A.M., and Nov. 14 at 8.)

BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Simon Rattle's supreme ensemble comes to Carnegie Hall for three rich concerts of music by Brahms and Schoenberg. Nov. 11 at 8: Brahms's Piano Quartet in G Minor (reverently orchestrated by Schoenberg) and Symphony No. 1 in C Minor. ♦ Nov. 12 at 8: Schoenberg's turbulent Chamber Symphony No. 1 and monodrama "Erwartung" (with the soprano Evelyn Herlitzius), followed by Brahms's pastoral Second Symphony. ♦ Nov. 13 at 8: Brahms's magisterial Third and Fourth Symphonies surround a fiery Expressionistic core, Schoenberg's "Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene." (212-247-7800.)

CHOIR OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA
In the first of two major concerts this week extolling the musical glories of the Anglican tradition, the excellent choir (with orchestra) of this grand Roman Catholic church, conducted by Kent Tritle, sings beloved works by Handel ("Zadok the Priest"), Purcell, and Herbert Howells ("Take Him Earth, for Cherishing," a memorial to President Kennedy). (Park Ave. at 84th St. 212-288-2520. Nov. 11 at 8.)

ST. THOMAS CHOIR: "MUSIC FOR REMEMBRANCE"
John Scott's choir of men and boys—the finest in the country—is joined by the cellist Myron Lutzke, among other musicians, in a concert featuring the meltingly beautiful Requiem Masses of Duruflé and Herbert Howells as well as John Tavener's "Song for Athene," sung at the memorial for Princess Diana. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. www.saintthomaschurch.org. Nov. 12 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

URSULA OPPENS
This distinguished pianist is at her radiant best when performing music by New York's leading composers. This recital—in which she is joined, at times, by the clarinettist Charles Neidich—is no exception, a program of short works by Joan Tower, Tania León, John Corigliano ("Winging It"), Tobias Picker (a première), and, of course, Elliott Carter. (Elebash Recital Hall, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave. Nov. 11 at 7. For ticket information, call 212-817-8215.)

LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET: "DON QUIXOTE"
The stellar West Coast foursome offers a delectable evening of music and words, an adaptation (narrated by the actor Phil Proctor) of Cervantes's knightly novel richly embellished by strains of Falla and Bizet and by traditional music from medieval and Renaissance Spain. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Nov. 11 at 8.)

JONATHAN BISS AND GABRIEL KAHANE
In one of those concerts that only (Le) Poisson Rouge can put together, the accomplished young pianist and the enterprising singer-songwriter collaborate on a concert celebrating Schubert by way of the grand Sonata in C Major, D. 840, and a selection of songs. Biss also performs works by Janáček and Kurtág; Kahane opens the concert with music of his own. (158 Bleecker St. www.lprnyc.com. Nov. 12 at 8.)

LEIF OVE ANDSNES: "PICTURES REFRAMED"
Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" is a favorite of both the sterling pianist and the visual artist Robin Rhode. They collaborate in a program combining video, still photography, and music; performances of Schumann's "Kinderscenen" and a new work by Thomas Larcher are also featured. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 13-14 at 8.)

"IRANIAN SOUNDS OF PEACE"
Hafez Nazeri is an acclaimed singer and virtuoso of the *setar* (an ancient Persian lute), a composer alumnus of the Mannes College of Music, and a performer with magnetic, pop-star appeal. As part of his Rumi Symphony Project, he teams up with his father, the distinguished singer Shahram Nazeri, and with such musicians as the violist Ida Kavafian and

the cellists Matt Haimovitz and Fred Sherry for a concert of original compositions that integrate the Western and Middle Eastern traditions. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 14 at 8.)

"MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES: CAPPELLA ROMANA
In what should be a fascinating stylistic mélange, Alexander Lingas leads his chamber choir in "Renaissance Encounters: Greek East and Latin West," a concert featuring examples of Byzantine chant as well as polyphonic motets by Lassus, Dufay, and others. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Nov. 15 at 4.)

PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD
The scintillating French pianist appears in recital at Alice Tully Hall, offering music by such European titans as Mozart, Stockhausen, George Benjamin, and Beethoven (the "Eroica" Variations). (212-721-6500. Nov. 15 at 5.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK: APRILE MILLO
Eve Queler's series, a decades-old mainstay of the Carnegie Hall season, has been hit hard by financial woes. In a highlight of a slimmed-down season, the redoubtable *lirico-spinto* soprano, who built her career singing Verdi and Puccini at the Met, appears in recital at the Rose Theatre, singing a selection of operatic arias, German lieder, and Italian art song. Her assisting musicians include the pianist Lucy Arner and the cellist Lynn Harrell. (Broadway at 60th St. 212-906-9137. Nov. 17 at 8.)

"COMPOSER PORTRAIT: RALPH SHAPEY"
Shapey (1921-2002) was a profane and combative presence in American modernism for half a century. He was also one hell of a composer, producing rock-solid pieces that combined acerbic atonality with sweeping lyrical flights. Miller Theatre's latest concert is a tribute offered by such musicians as the violinist Miranda Cuckson, the New York Woodwind Quintet, and the Argento Chamber Ensemble, who perform "Three for Six," "Interchange," and other works. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Nov. 17 at 8.)

MOVIES OPENING

THE END OF POVERTY
Philippe Diaz directed this documentary, about the historical roots and present-day causes of economic inequality. Opening Nov. 13. (In limited release.)

FANTASTIC MR. FOX
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Nov. 13. (In limited release.)

FOUR SEASONS LODGE
A documentary, directed by Andrew Jacobs, about the annual reunion of a group of Holocaust survivors. Opening Nov. 11. (IFC Center.)

THE HAND OF FATIMA
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Nov. 13. (Anthology Film Archives.)

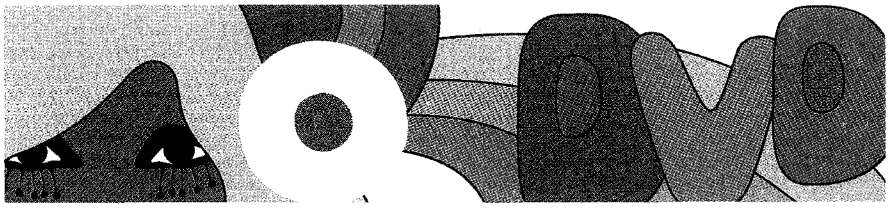
THE MESSENGER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 13. (In wide release.)

OH MY GOD?
Peter Rodger directed this documentary, about the diverse forms of religious belief. Opening Nov. 13. (Sunshine Cinema.)

PIRATE RADIO
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Nov. 13. (In wide release.)

2012
Roland Emmerich directed this futuristic thriller, about an impending doomsday. Starring John Cusack, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Amanda Peet, Danny Glover, and Woody Harrelson. Opening Nov. 13. (In wide release.)

UNCERTAINTY
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Nov. 13. (IFC Center.)


KARI MODEN

DVD NOTES
DARK SIDE OF THE EARTH

The rapid rise of film noir in the postwar years was due to such factors as the influence of German Expressionism, the liberating innovations of Orson Welles, the new importance of independent producers, and the probing of wartime traumas. But, as seen in the five sharp-edged films in "**Film Noir Classics I**" (Columbia), an equally important cause was the desire to reveal the grim underside of American life.

Fritz Lang—one of the German immigrant filmmakers who helped to define noir style—never made a documentary, but with "The Big Heat," from 1953, he shines a glaring light on the influence of organized crime on government and the police. When Sgt. Dave Bannion (Glenn Ford), of the homicide squad, sticks his nose into an officer's fishy suicide, he is dissuaded by his superiors and then by the Mob, which dynamites his car, killing his wife (Jocelyn Brando, Marlon's sister). Bannion turns in his badge and makes the case personal, joined by Debby Marsh (Gloria Grahame), the mistress of a sadistic gangster, Vince Stone (Lee Marvin). The scene in which Stone scalds Debby's face with boiling coffee is one of the signal cinematic crimes of the era, and Lang films it with a chilling restraint. His tight, elliptical images conjure an even wider web of greed, fear, and evil than they show, and—aided by a lurid array of supporting characters—he lays it out with a sense of diabolical delight.

The director Irving Lerner had extensive experience with documentaries when he made "Murder by Contract," in 1958, and it shows. His antihero, Claude (Vince Edwards), is a working-class man who, in his struggle to make a down payment on a house, decides to become a "contractor." Claude comes equipped with a dazzling set of deadly wiles—but also a regular guy's hangups, which get in the way of his big job, the killing of a woman who is about to testify against a high-level mobster. Much of the movie is taken up with the absorbing practicalities of murder—but, as in life itself, the absurd comes to the fore, here embodied by the bumbling antics and colorful banter of his two handlers (Herschel Bernardi and Phillip Pine). Lerner directs with a wary neutrality that leaves judgment aside; he lets the killer speak his piece, resulting in a few politicized surprises.

—*Richard Brody*

’Tis the season to give and receive!

THE NEW YORKER

It’s the gift that has it all: in-depth reporting, surprising opinions, sharp wit, and a signature mix of politics, culture, humor, and the arts.

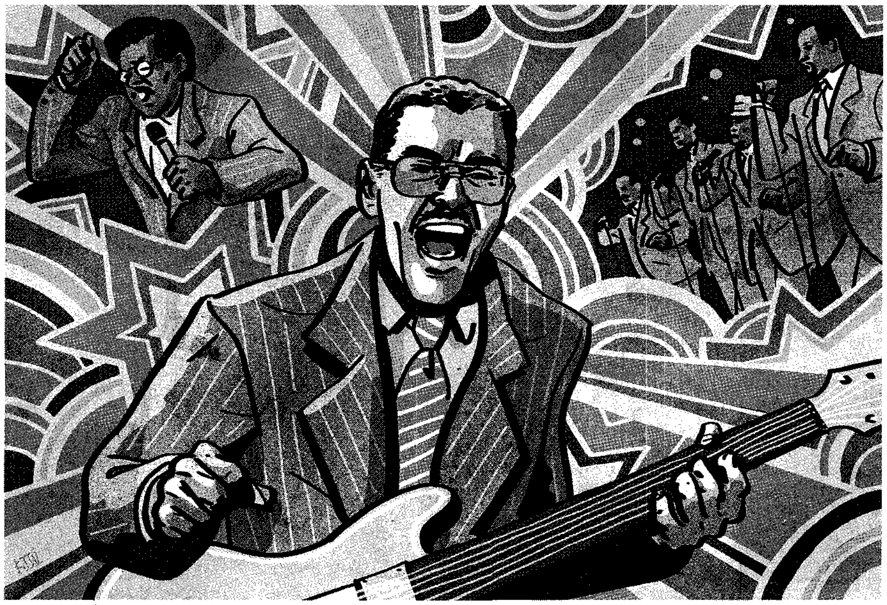
A gift of *The New Yorker* will warm their heart all year – give one today!

Order gift subscriptions at newyorker.com

WILLIAM KUNSTLER: DISTURBING THE UNIVERSE
A documentary about the activist lawyer, directed by his daughters Emily Kunstler and Sarah Kunstler. Opening Nov. 13. (Cinema Village.)

NOW PLAYING

AMELIA
Hilary Swank, as Amelia Earhart, has a big, toothy smile, high cheekbones, and short, irregular hair that seems to have been chopped by a butcher knife. Earhart's clothes—the men's pants, shirts, and leather flying jackets—perfectly fit Swank's lean, small-hipped body. Looking at her elongated sprawl and lope, we can see why Earhart's androgynous style became chic. Swank is fine, yet it's not an exciting performance, and, the way the movie has been conceived, it can't be. The director, Mira Nair, and the screenwriters, Ronald Bass and Anna Hamilton Phelan, frame their biopic with Earhart's doomed last flight, in 1937, but the accumulated personal and social detail in the middle of the movie lacks any great interest, and Nair's direction is rhythmless and placid. With Richard Gere, as the publishing heir and public-relations whiz George Putnam, who packages Earhart into a national celebrity and then marries her, and Ewan McGregor, as the aeronautics executive Gene Vidal, with whom she has an affair. The filmmakers' treatment of the affair is so tame that, bizarrely, seventy-five years after the fact, they appear eager to protect Earhart from scandal even as they're publicizing her secret love life. The handsome cinematography, in conventional *National Geographic* style, is by Stuart Dryburgh. The old airplanes, including a Lockheed Vega 5B, which looks like a fat bumblebee, are the most stirring sights in the movie.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 11/2/09.) (In wide release.)



The Numero Group's "Eccentric Soul Revue" brings Syl Johnson, Renaldo Domino, and the Notations to the Grand Ballroom and the Music Hall of Williamsburg.

KYLE T. WEBSTER

THE BOX
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

CRACKING UP
Jerry Lewis's last feature film to date, from 1983, lives up to its title in ways that seem painfully intentional. He stars as the nebbishy Warren Nefron, whose bleak identity is defined by the opening scenes, in which he tries and fails to commit suicide. (The attempts run throughout the film, in set pieces that are among his best ever.) In despair, Warren sees a psychiatrist (Herb Edelman), whose lame and craven methods only deepen his abyss. The comic tragedy is a bourgeois nightmare: out of work, alone, unloved, physically defenseless, spiritually unmoored, clinically clumsy, devoid of charm, Warren is condemned to life with nothing but the weight of his dark memories. Lewis plays multiple characters (including Warren's hapless ancestors and inept guru), all equally damned—but Warren's deliverance comes from a word that also serves as the film's alternate title, "Smorgasbord," which, through the plot's tenuous tricks, comes to represent nothing less than a clean slate of identity (and winks at the story's slapdash construction). But, for all the occasionally forced antics, Lewis's repeated "goodbyes" whispered directly into the camera are sincere, pathetic—and unrequited—pleas to be called back from the void.—*Richard Brody* (Anthology Film Archives; Nov. 15.)

LA DANSE
Frederick Wiseman, in this documentary portrait of the Paris Opera Ballet, haunts the stairways, rehearsal rooms, and watery subterranean corridors of the Palais Garnier (the Ballet's home), and we feel that we have become, with him, phantoms of the opera. The Ballet is an enormous organism at the center of which is the artistic and administrative head, the tentacular Brigitte Lefèvre, a brisk, authoritative woman, manipulative as hell. With evident pleasure, Wiseman turns back to the choreographers and dancers, whom he photographs not in the manner of the commercial cinema, where bodies are broken up into threshing limbs, but in full frame, top to bottom, with space around them, so we can see the incredible things they are capable of as well as, inevitably, their mistakes, missteps, and gradual improvements. So many of Wiseman's films have been about institutions that didn't work well, or that merely penned up the broken-down Americans who fell off the tracks of economic and physical success. It's a joyous experience to see an institution in full flower—to see not dysfunction and dereliction but the many forms of striving and virtue.—*D.D.* (11/2/09) (Film Forum.)

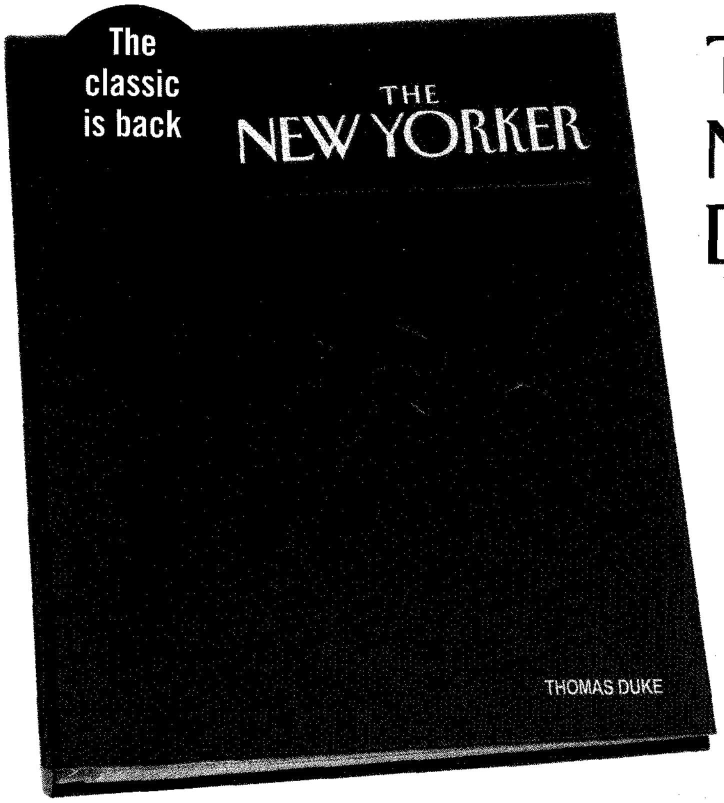
FANTASTIC MR. FOX
For his stop-motion adaptation of Roald Dahl's book—about a fox who steals from three grotesque farmers, who go to absurd lengths to capture him as he leads his family and friends on increasingly desperate adventures in order to survive—the director Wes Anderson, co-writing the script with Noah Baumbach, greatly amplified the story and its emotional spectrum. Mr. and Mrs. Fox (voiced by George Clooney and Meryl Streep)—he's a journalist, she's an artist—bring to life a view of marriage that's as bittersweet and insightful as that of any recent live-action movie, and their idiosyncratic son (Jason Schwartzman) is set up in a touching rivalry with his cousin (Eric Anderson, the director's brother). Visually, the movie is a wonder, with its profusion of detail and exquisitely focussed "performances" by the figurines, whom Anderson frames in images as precisely composed as those featuring actors in his live-action work. The voice performances are sparkling and apt; the adventure plot is realized with a scenographic splendor that's as understated as it is dazzling, and is also invested with a surprising moral weight. Though the emotional realms—and the philosophical twists—that Anderson evokes are unusually sophisticated for a children's film, its exuberance is a universal tonic.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

GENTLEMEN BRONCOS
Compared with this wildly inventive, audacious, and genre-swirling comedy, the director Jared Hess's first two films, "Napoleon Dynamite" and "Nacho Libre," are models of narrative sobriety. The story is straightforward enough: Benjamin (Michael Angarano), a lonely teen-ager being homeschooled by his poor single mother (Jennifer Coolidge) in a dome-shaped house somewhere west of the Rockies, salves his soul by writing and illustrating whacked-out science-fiction fantasies. When he enters one in a story contest, his idol, the popular novelist Ronald Chevalier (Jemaine Clement), passes it off as his own and turns it into a best-seller. Meanwhile, two threadbare local filmmakers (Halley Feiffer and Hector Jimenez) also get hold of the property. Astonishingly, Hess turns this fable-like premise into a juvenile but grand-scale vision of earth and Heaven. The small and pious town is filled with Bosch-like grotesques and jolting details (such as a store's lingerie department's facing the gun counter), but it's transfigured by Hess's parallel worlds: Chevalier's supercilious version of Benjamin's story and the teen filmmakers' cheesy one are set against cosmic, transcendent—and ridiculously jejune—scenes from Benjamin's own imagination. The events are superintended by a stranger dressed in white: Dusty (Mike White, who also co-produced), Benjamin's guardian angel. Hess, who is from a Mormon community, blends local color with celestial inspiration to create a forthright and original religious vision matched by few films, whether dramatic or comic.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

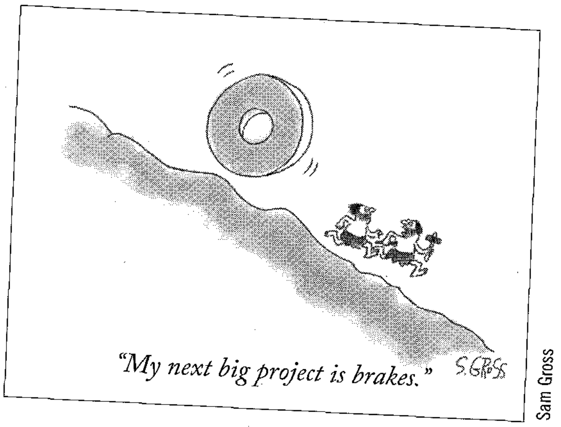
GOOD HAIR
Chris Rock's documentary takes as its starting point a question posed by his daughter: "Daddy, why don't I have good hair?" To answer that question and the many others that surround it, Rock relies mainly on the personal stories of black women to weave a funny, tangled tale about the role of natural and straightened hair in the African-American community—and, by extension, about broader issues of identity, beauty, and economics. The structure is traditional, alternating between talking-head interviews and comic travel pieces—Rock journeys to India (where most of the hair sold for extensions originates) and to Los Angeles (where he does a brief Borat-like bit trying to sell black hair to hair shops). Though the film deals with one narrow aspect of African-American life, its scope is surprisingly universal, due in large part to the wise, funny, and forthright interviews, with such subjects as the poet Maya Angelou, the actress Raven-Symoné, the rappers Salt and Pepa, and a group of barbershop patrons who deserve special mention for their frank discussion of the difficulties of touching a black woman's hair during intimate moments. Meanwhile, the microeconomics of hair treatment are communicated vividly—elaborate weaves can cost five thousand dollars—and the film is framed by the Bronner Brothers' black-hair show in Atlanta, which builds to a Battle Royale that pits the country's top hairdressers against one another in an unforgettably surreal spectacle.—*Ben Greenman* (In limited release.)

THE HAND OF FATIMA
This documentary by Augusta Palmer, about her father—the rock critic Robert Palmer, who died in 1997, at the age of fifty-two—is anchored by his devotion to the Master Musicians of Jajouka,

Advertisement



THE 2010 NEW YORKER DESK DIARY


"My next big project is brakes."

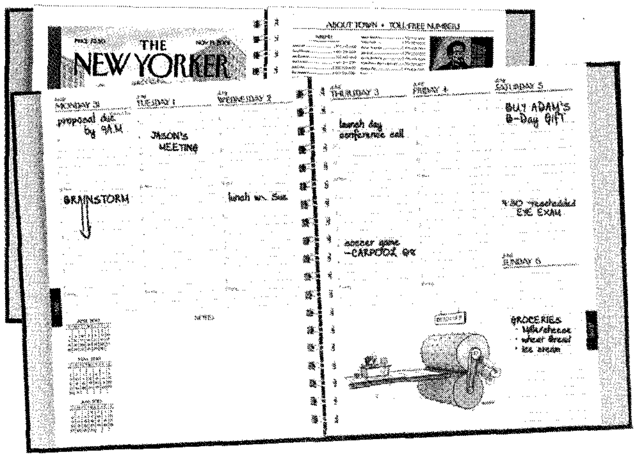
S.GROSS

Sam Gross

Two easy ways to order:

www.newyorkerstore.com
Order online to save more than 10% and receive FREE personalization.

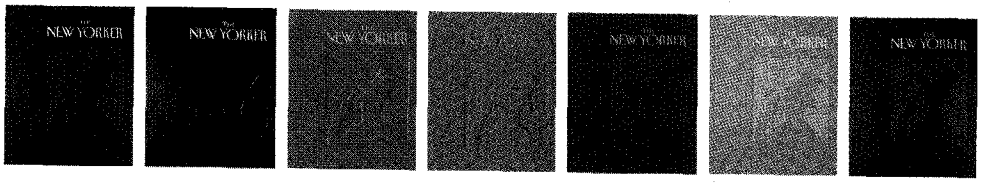
1-800-897-8666
Order by calling toll-free
M-F, 9 A.M.-5 P.M. E.S.T.



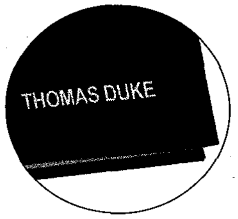
Featuring:

- Helpful travel-related toll-free numbers
- Handy New York City area listings and maps
- Vibrant colors with ribbon marker
- Big 7 1/4" x 10" pages
- Spiral-bound to lie flat
- Favorite Caption Contest winners

Available in seven bold colors:



Classic Blue w/ silver stamped embossing	**Ruby Red** w/ gold stamped embossing	**Gunmetal** w/ silver stamped embossing	**Iced Teal** w/ soft gold stamped embossing	**Burgundy Suède** w/ gold stamped embossing	**Orange Linen** w/ soft gold stamped embossing	**Genuine Black Leather** w/ silver stamped embossing



FREE personalization when you order online

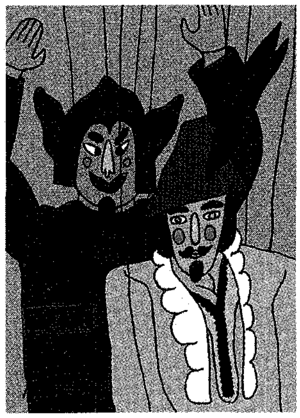
Online: $32.95* each; FREE personalization Phone: $36.95* each; $38.95* each with personalization
Black Leather: $44.95* each with personalization *Plus shipping & handling. Add applicable sales tax where required by law.

NEWYORKERSTORE.COM

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
DOLL FACE

This week, at La Mama, the Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theatre presents "Twelfth Night," for sixteen marionettes performing on three tea trays (the beach, Orsino's palace, and Olivia's house). This sounds pretty camp, but, in fact, it's an entirely respectable piece of modernism. It's minimalist. (Three tea trays!) It's artificial. (The actors, being eight inches tall, can sit in teacups while declaiming their lines.) It's also reflexive; it's about puppetry. The puppets' handlers, in costume, hover visibly over their charges. Now and then, they butt in, stealing the lines for themselves. The show involves no advanced puppetry. The marionettes do not have moving mouths or eyes. They look like something out of a gumball machine. But this "Twelfth Night" is philosophical, in a skeptical, Slavic sort of way. (The company was founded, in 1990, by Vít Hořejš, a Czech puppeteer.) When Orsino, reclining in a bowl of grapes, begins his famous speech, "If music be the food of love, play on," you seem to feel, with no bitterness, the vanity of human wishes.

—*Joan Acocella*



JORDAN AWAN

a legendary group of Sufi trance musicians who were famously associated with Beat writers (including William S. Burroughs) and such rock acts as the Rolling Stones. Palmer made many pilgrimages to Morocco to experience the group at first hand and to soak in their spiritual essence, and his daughter's film is, in part, a travelogue in which she retraces his journeys. It's also an ethnomusicological study of the Master Musicians, a family-centered autobiography, and a critical biography of her father, who left behind an important body of work that explored the roots of American rock music. The material is rich, sometimes too rich—there are manic seventies drug tales, domestic soap operas, exotic locales, interviews with her father's colleagues and fellow-travellers, and representations of rock criticism through a mix of photography, animation, and narration—and the sprawl is occasionally overwhelming. But the film ultimately succeeds in shedding kaleidoscopic light on both the man and the music.—*B.G.* (Anthology Film Archives.)

HÄXAN

Mixing sophistication and naïveté with virtuosity and titillation, the director Benjamin Christensen's 1922 horror film—a guided tour in seven chapters of witchcraft through the ages—is comparable to films by Dreyer, Murnau and Buñuel—as well as to ones by Ken Russell, Ed Wood, and the makers of "The Blair Witch Project" (who named their company after it). Christensen also plays, with startling gusto, a darting-tongued Satan who compels his female minions to show their respect by kissing his hairy derrière. He applies modern sexual and anthropological awareness to primordial material, putting it all together with a visual artistry that ranges from stunning dioramas of heavenly visions to Satanic celebrations that mingle Bosch with Breugel. Though Christensen clearly means to debunk superstition, he also makes it genuinely nightmarish. The movie's torrent of theatrical tableaux, documentary interludes, and fluid cinematic sequences reflects a bristling vitality that is often harrowing and even heartbreaking, as in his depiction of a medieval witch hunt that lays waste to an entire household. Christensen displays an acute psychological instinct for grief and bitterness (as well as for the destructive power of repressed desires) and an appetite for the grit of the Middle Ages. Silent.—*Michael Sragow* (MOMA; Nov. 13.)

THE MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS

Believe it or not, the U.S. Army used to contain a special unit that was devoted exclusively to the use of psychic power as a tool of war. That, at any rate, is the scoop dug up by Bob Wilton (Ewan McGregor), an eager reporter based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. En route to Iraq, he encounters a restive figure named Cassidy (George Clooney), who claims to have been a "Jedi Warrior"—a secret operative trained in mental combat. His reminiscences revolve around a man named Django (Jeff Bridges), who urged his super-recruits to run through walls and peer into the future. So clearly is this the comic heart of Grant Heslov's film that he gets stuck in a loop of flashbacks; these are so diverting (especially when Kevin Spacey rolls up as Django's nemesis) that they drain the fun from the adventures of Cassidy and the Wilton kid, which seem hapless and inconsequential by comparison. The script, by Peter Straughan, is adapted from a nonfiction book by the British journalist Jon Ronson, and it's no surprise that the leading men, with Clooney in good fettle, should relish the battle of deluded wits; yet the story, even if parts of it are provable, barely feels like a story at all, let alone a durable satire on military policy. It's more like a string of larks and skits, dangling in space, waiting for a plot to come along.—*Anthony Lane* (11/9/09) (In wide release.)

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY

In this creep-o-rama, a San Diego couple believe that their house is haunted and set up a video camera in search of proof. The film, which was shot more than directed by Oren Peli, uses its minuscule fifteen-thousand-dollar budget to good effect; the grainy images and direct sound heighten the suspense. There is not much to look at, but this failing, paradoxically, holds the attention. Peli understands that the root of true fear is in waiting for something to happen. A close inspection might reveal the movie's many flaws, but, as a communal scare experience, it's as enjoyable as a visit to a spook house.—*Bruce Diones* (In limited release.)

PIRATE RADIO

A great subject made into a prankish, tiresome movie. In the mid-sixties, when the BBC was still monopolizing radio in Great Britain, a rogue operator, broadcasting from a ship anchored in the North Sea, plays rock to a country that could only hear the Beatles and the Stones live or by going to a record store. Richard Curtis, the screenwriter of "Four Weddings and a Funeral" and the director of "Love Actually," fills the floating station with a scroungy lot of misfits and oddballs. But instead of making a movie about what the music meant, Curtis, aping the manner of a naughty English picture from about 1955, has made a movie about the sexual arrangements on board. He's like a liberated uncle, making sure that everyone gets laid. The teasing and jokes and sexless sex scenes never coalesce into anything. With Bill Nighy as the owner of the station; Rhys Ifans as a super-cool stud d.j.; Philip Seymour Hoffman as an American wild man; Tom Sturridge as a high-school dropout who loses his cherry; and Kenneth Branagh, cursed with a Hitler mustache, in a cartoonish role as an authoritarian government minister trying to bring the floating station down.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

PRECIOUS: BASED ON THE NOVEL "PUSH" BY SAPPHIRE

How you respond to Lee Daniels's film is likely to depend on two variables: first, to what extent the preposterous title will get your tongue in a twist, and second, whether or not you object to having extreme domestic abuse waved in front of your face. Gabourey Sidibe plays an obese, unhappy Harlem teen-ager named Clareece Jones; the task of the movie is to turn her nickname, Precious, from a wretched irony to a cause for pride—to surround her with people who will treasure her as she deserves. At the start, this seems a distant dream, since Precious is pregnant with her second child (fathered by her own father) and trapped at home with her monster of a mother (Mo'Nique)—a withering portrait of indolence and wrath. (Might conservatives latch onto the film as a cautionary tale about an obsessive reliance on welfare? If so, that hardly seems to be what Daniels intended.) Precious finds hope in an alternative-school program, where she meets the beautiful and saintly—not to say implausible—figure of Blu Rain (Paula Patton). The tonal blend of damp-eyed fantasy and gruelling, closeup brutishness is at once morally suspect and highly effective in its manipulations; what rescues the story from the brink of the gothic is the poise and purpose of its leading performers—including Mariah Carey, no less, who is almost unrecognizable in her role as a social worker.—*A.L.* (11/9/09) (In wide release.)

UNCERTAINTY

Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Lynn Collins star as young lovers in New York who move through two alternating stories—one, an affectionate drama, depicting a family gathering, with troubles and uncertainties roiling below the surface; the other, a thriller, set in Chinatown, in which the couple find a lost cell phone filled with compromising information, witness a murder, and get chased through Mott Street by an assassin. The team of Scott McGehee and David Siegel wrote and directed. The way the two stories comment on each other is more a structural gimmick than a dramatic device, but the directors achieve an unusual degree of intimacy between the lovers, and the movie is gripping to the end. Handheld cinematography by Rain Li.—*D.D.* (IFC Center.)

Also Playing

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: In wide release. **COLLAPSE:** In limited release. **THE FOURTH KIND:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Through Nov. 19: The films of Jerry Lewis. Nov. 12 at 7 and Nov. 15 at 9: "The Bellboy" (1960). ♦ Nov. 12 at 8:45 and Nov. 15 at 6:30: "The Nutty Professor" (1963). ♦ Nov. 13 at 7 and Nov. 15 at 4:30: "The Ladies Man" (1961). ♦ Nov. 13 at 9: "The Errand Boy" (1961). ♦ Nov. 14 at 2:30 and Nov. 17 at 9: "The Patsy" (1964). ♦ Nov. 14 at 4:30: "The Family Jewels" (1965). ♦ Nov. 14 at 6:30: "Three on a Couch" (1966). ♦ Nov. 14 at 9: "The Big Mouth" (1967). ♦ Nov. 15 at 2:45: "Cracking Up" (†).

ASIA SOCIETY
725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (212-517-2742)—The films of Tsai Ming-Liang. Nov. 13 at 6:45: "Rebels of the Neon God" (1992). ♦ Nov. 15 at 2: "Face" (2009), followed by a Q. & A. with the director. ♦ Nov. 15 at 5:15: A conversation with Tsai Ming-Liang, moderated by Frances Hui. ♦ Nov. 17 at 6:45: "Vive l'Amour" (1994).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—New French films. All films are in French. Nov. 11 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Grown Ups" (2008, Anne Novion). ♦ Nov. 12 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Irène" (2009, Alain Cavalier). ♦ Nov. 13 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Ricky" (2009, François Ozon). ♦ Nov. 14 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Park Benches" (2009, Bruno Podalydès). ♦ Nov. 15 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Please Please Me!" (2009, Emmanuel Mouret). ♦ In revival. Nov. 16 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Detour" (1945, Edgar G. Ulmer). The 6:50 screening will be introduced by Noah Isenberg.

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Nov. 11-15 and Nov. 17 at 1, 3:45, 7, and 9:35 and Nov. 16 at 1 and 3:45: "The Red Shoes" (1948, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger). ♦ Nov. 16 at 7: "The Saga of Gösta Berling" (1924, Mauritz Stiller; silent).

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (212-875-5610)—"Italian Neo-Realism." All films are in Italian. Nov. 11 at 2 and 6:15: "The Earth Cries Out" (1949, Duilio Coletti). ♦ Nov. 11 at 4 and 8:15: "The Sky Is Red" (1950, Claudio Gora). ♦ Nov. 12 at 3 and 6:30: "La Terra Trema" (1948, Luchino Visconti). ♦ Nov. 13 at 2 and 6:15: "Sunday in August" (1950, Luciano Emmer). ♦ Nov. 13 at 4 and Nov. 15 at 1: "Women Without Names" (1950, Géza von Radványi). ♦ Nov. 14 at 1:30: "No Peace Under the Olive Trees" (1950, Giuseppe De Santis). ♦ Nov. 14 at 3:50 and Nov. 17 at 4:15: "Paths of Hope" (1950, Pietro Germi). ♦ Nov. 15 at 3: "Miracle in Milan" (1951, Vittorio De Sica). ♦ Nov. 16 at 2 and 6:15: "Rome 11:00" (1952, De Santis). ♦ Nov. 16 at 4:15 and 8:30: "Attention! Bandits!" (1951, Carlo Lizzani). ♦ Nov. 17 at 2 and 6:15: "Two Cents Worth of Hope" (1952, Renato Castellani). ♦ Nov. 17 at 8:30: "Umberto D." (1952, De Sica).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Dec. 22: The films of François Truffaut. Nov. 17 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: "Two English Girls" (1971).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—Special screenings. Nov. 13-15 at 11 A.M.: "Best Boy" (1979, Ira Wohl). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Nov. 13-14: "The Meaning of Life" (1983, Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones). ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction," a documentary series. Nov. 16 at 8: "The Weather Underground" (2002, Sam Green and Bill Siegel).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"An Auteurist History of Film." Nov. 11-13 at 1: "Cabiria" (1914, Giovanni Pastrone; silent). ♦ "Iberoamérica: Our Way(s)." All films are in Spanish. Nov. 11 at 4: "The Rind" (2007, Carlos Ameglio). ♦ Nov. 11 at 7: "The Dead Girl's Feast"

TABLES FOR TWO
PRIME MEATS

HONORE BROWN

465 Court St. (718-254-0327)—A few months back, an earnest young man in Brooklyn explained how to eat a sausage. Bavarians, apparently, are brought their *Weisswurst* in a bowl of its cooking water; they cut it longitudinally, remove the meat, and discard the casing. Why not just cut the thing latitudinally and eat it the regular way? Well, because this is the new venture from Frank Castronovo and Frank Falcinelli, whose Frankies Spuntino, with its panini and other light Italian dishes, gave rise to a mini-empire that has established itself as the apogee of a certain kind of laid-back but fastidious hipsterism, a zone where heirloom tomato meets vintage T-shirt.

When the premises a few doors down from the Spuntino became available, the two Franks realized that the huge kitchen would enable them to prepare all their meats from scratch. The new restaurant is a sort of homage to late-Victorian German-American restaurants, and the Franks take obvious delight in curating every element of it. The wood panelling and large antique bar are beautifully finished, there are gas lamps, and behind the bar is a nest of antique punch bowls (the punch changes daily). Waiters look as if they'd auditioned for "Deadwood"; their uniform includes braces and waistcoats, and facial hair seems to be compulsory. And cocktails abound with recherché ingredients like homemade Buddha's-hand bitters; they are a standout, even in the context of the current cocktail renaissance.

The restaurant is bound to delight the Franks' fans, but, if there's a weak link, it's the food. The menu is on the small side, and the Franks seem so absorbed in the voguish quest for unusual or local ingredients that they've overlooked the transformative potential of actually cooking things. A dish of meats and sauerkraut was rather waterlogged, and a sea-bass special, in a buttery sauce with white cranberry beans, verged on overcooked. But there are successes, too: trout arrives in splendidly crispy fillets, topped with finely grated horseradish, and the lambs' ribs with *shisito* pepper—cured overnight in cumin, then smoked over apple chips and hickory—augurs well for the in-house butchering. Prime Meats is clearly a work in progress; a second dining room seems constantly about to open, and employees speak excitedly about plans for a speakeasy upstairs and a retail butcher shop around the corner. For now, it's probably best to stand at the bar, watch the focus brought to creating cocktails, and wonder if similar care could usefully be applied to the cooking. (Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Main courses $13-$20.)

—*Leo Carey*

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

4,500 kids will die today from water-related diseases.

We believe clean water is a basic human right, and we're doing something about that.

charity: water is a nonprofit organization bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations.

Help us spread the word.

charitywater.org

charity: water

(2008, Matheus Nachtergaele). ♦ "To Save and Project." Nov. 11 at 4:30 and Nov. 12 at 4: "The Changing Village" (1964, Lester James Peries). ♦ Nov. 11 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 5:30: "The Adventures of Prince Achmed" (1926, Lotte Reineger; silent). The Nov. 11 screening will be introduced by Kara Walker. ♦ Nov. 12 at 7 and Nov. 14 at 5: "Far from Vietnam" (1967, Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard, et al.). ♦ Nov. 13 at 4:30: "Häxan" (†). ♦ Nov. 13 at 5 and Nov. 14 at 1:30: "Le Joli Mai" (1963, Chris Marker and Pierre Lhomme). ♦ Nov. 14 at 7:30 and Nov. 15 at 1:30: "L'Argent" (1928, Marcel L'Herbier).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Nov. 13 at 9:30: "J'Accuse" (1919, Abel Gance), introduced by Kim Deitch.

READINGS AND TALKS

THE POWERHOUSE ARENA
Paul Auster reads from and discusses his new novel, "Invisible," with John Freeman, the editor of *Granta*. (The PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St., at Water St., Brooklyn. 718-666-3049. Nov. 12 at 7.)

ROBERT HASS
The poet reads from his work. He will then be interviewed by the poet Saskia Hamilton. (Heyman Center for the Humanities, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. For more information, visit www.heymancenter.org. Nov. 16 at 6:15.)

92ND STREET Y
On the eve of the publication of Nabokov's cobbled-together incomplete posthumous novel, "The Original of Laura," the Nabokov biographer Brian Boyd, the writer Martin Amis, and the designer Chip Kidd read from and talk about the work, which was written on index cards that the author intended to have destroyed. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Nov. 16 at 8.)

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALISTS
Colum McCann, Greg Grandin, Ann Lauterbach, Deborah Heiligman, and the other finalists for this year's National Book Awards read from their potentially prizewinning works. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 212-229-5488. Nov. 17 at 7.)

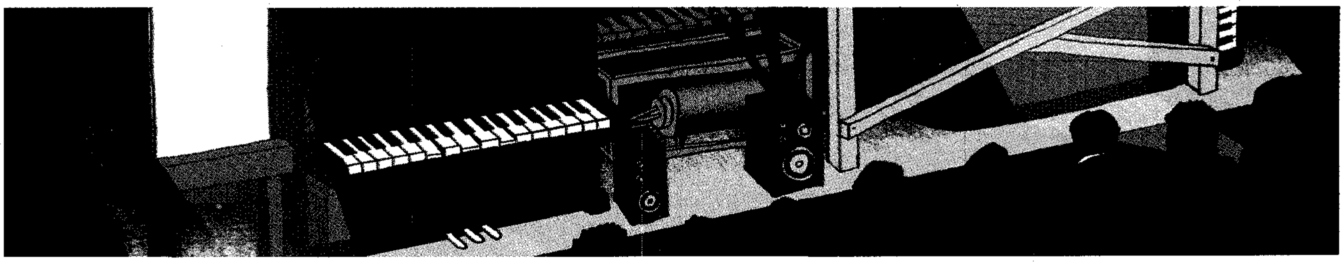
ABOVE AND BEYOND

"MORE THAN YOU EXPECTED"
The online magazines *The Rumpus* and *SMITH*, the literary magazine *Tin House*, and the child-advocacy organization Shine Global present an evening of literature, comedy, and music. The novelists Rick Moody and Jonathan Ames will appear, along with the writer Starlee Kine and the cartoonist David Rees. With the comedians Todd Barry and Eugene Mirman and the teen-age musical act Care Bears on Fire. (Highline Ballroom, 431 W. 16th St. 212-414-5994. Nov. 17 at 7.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
The contemporary-art pageant moves to **Sotheby's,** with an evening sale on Nov. 11. The first twenty lots come from the collection of Mary Schiller Myers and Louis S. Myers, including two sensual de Koonings from the seventies; the sale's top estimate, however, goes to a large Warhol silk-screen painting, "200 One Dollar Bills." Other significant entries include Hockney's brightly colored "California Art Collector" and Jasper Johns's monochrome "Gray Numbers." A day sale of contemporary art follows (Nov. 12), after which things mellow out with a wine sale (Nov. 14). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ After its evening auction of contemporary art (Nov. 10), **Christie's** will hold two follow-up sales (Nov. 11) offering works by the usual postwar suspects, including Lichtenstein, Johns, and Albers, as well as a handful of whimsical mobiles by Alexander Calder. Then it's on to the first of the week's Latin-American sales (Nov. 17). Fans of Botero's generously proportioned figures should be especially pleased, with ten works to choose from (including paintings, drawings, and one very large sculpture, "Mujer Fumando"); Rufino Tamayo, whose work has been doing particularly well at auction, also has a strong presence, with seven paintings in the sale, including the Cubist-inspired "Mujeres" (1960). A day sale follows on Nov. 18. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ **Phillips**, aiming for maximum impact, has programmed a frenetic week. At the evening sale of contemporary art (Nov. 12), works by Richard Prince, Warhol, and Ed Ruscha will go under the gavel; one of the more intriguing pieces is also one of the least tangible, a poetic construction in light and fog by Olafur Eliasson. The photography department presents a general sale (Nov. 14) that includes everything from prints by contemporary artists (like Andreas Gursky and Gregory Crewdson) to fashion plates (Avedon, Helmut Newton, etc.) and more classic works (by Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and Robert Frank). The house's final offering of the week is a selection of prints and editions (Nov. 15), featuring works by Goya, Beckmann, and Klee. (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)

NEWYORKER.COM

Visit the Goings On blog, at www.newyorker.com/go/goingson, for additional cultural coverage and commentary.



"Stifter's Dinge," at the Park Avenue Armory.

JAMES MAJOWSKI

ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
WAR AND PEACE
Nov. 18-Dec. 30

Hollywood was a vigorous participant in the Second World War; in conjunction with the publication of the book "Best Years," by Charles and Mirella Jona Affron, MOMA presents a series of films of the nineteen-forties, including Lewis Milestone's "North Star," with a script by Lillian Hellman, and Jean Renoir's "Diary of a Chambermaid," written by and co-starring Burgess Meredith. (212-708-9480.)

ART
KAFKAESQUE
Nov. 18-19

The French installation artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and the American composer Ari Benjamin Meyers have teamed up for "K.62," a "musical mystery" inspired by Orson Welles's film of Kafka's "The Trial." Presented by Performa, the piece runs for two nights at the Abrons Arts Center. (212-366-5700.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
FISH TALES
Nov. 22

Naima Rauam's paintings of the old Fulton Fish Market, which moved to the Bronx four years ago, are on display at 210 Front St. On the final day of the exhibit, the historian Jack Putnam, the writer Terry Walton, and the woodcarver Sal Polisi will be on hand. (www.artpm.com.)

THE THEATRE
NACHTMUSIK NOVICE
Nov. 24

Catherine Zeta-Jones makes her Broadway début alongside Angela Lansbury and Alexander Hanson in a revival of "A Little Night Music," Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's musical take on Ingmar Bergman's "Smiles of a Summer Night." Trevor Nunn directs, at the Walter Kerr. (212-239-6200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
ARMORY SOUNDS
Dec. 16-20

The Park Avenue Armory has become a favored space for grand avant-garde productions. Next comes "Stifter's Dinge," a multimedia exploration (complete with five player pianos) of Romanticism and ecology by the dynamic German composer and arranger Heiner Goebbels. (212-721-6500.)

WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

With you when *you need help designing your future*

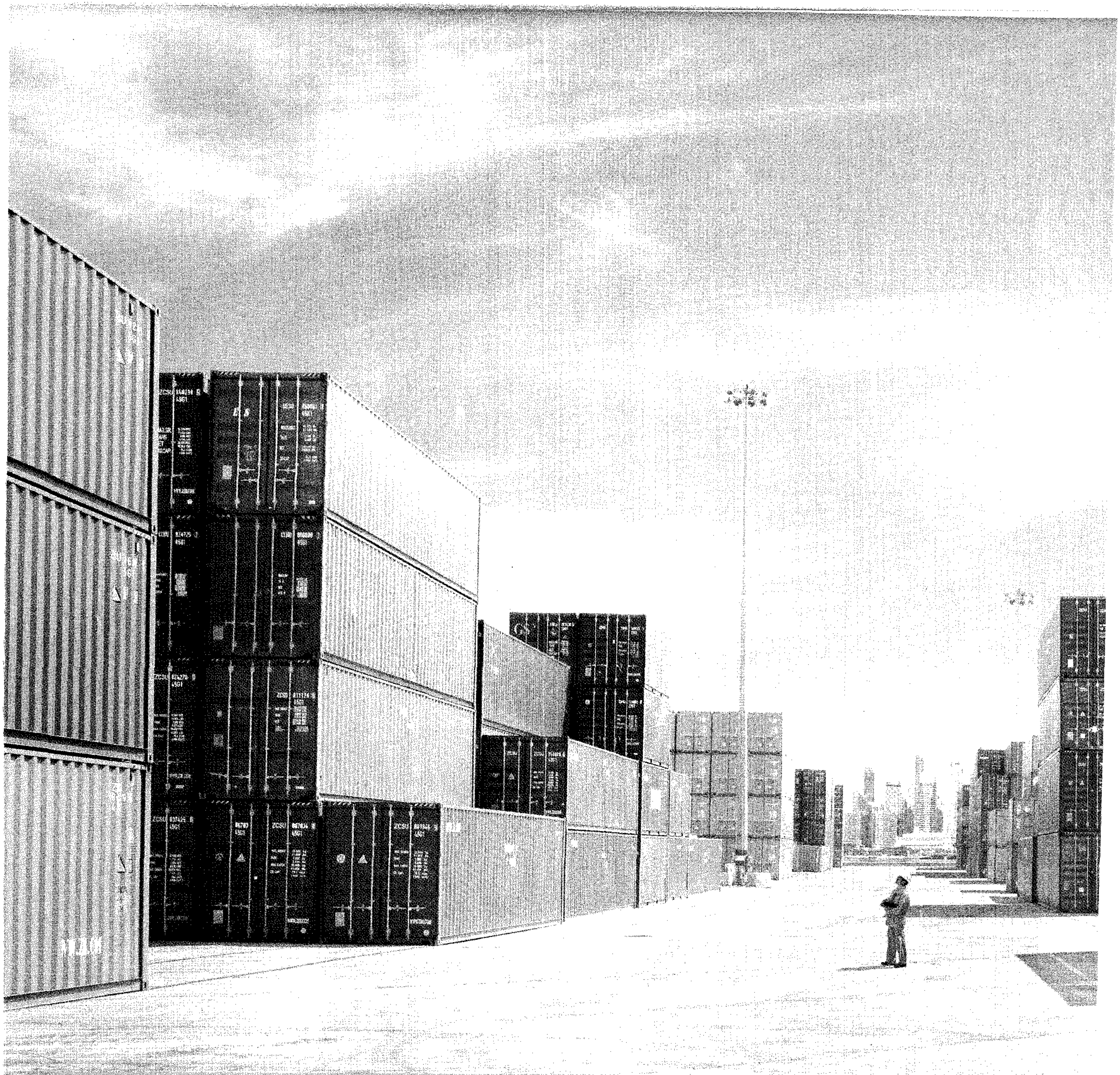
Introducing Wells Fargo Advisors The path to tomorrow takes more than just knowledge and insight. It takes a personal relationship with someone you trust. That's why one of our advisors will sit down with you, get to know you and involve you in outlining a specialized plan that addresses your individual financial goals. With over 150 years of experience and offices nearby and nationwide, we're with you when you need someone who has the planning expertise to address today's unique challenges. Talk with one of our Financial Advisors or visit wellsfargoadvisors.com today.

Wachovia Securities is now Wells Fargo Advisors.

Together we'll go far

Investment and Insurance Products: NOT FDIC-Insured | NO Bank Guarantee | MAY Lose Value

Wells Fargo Advisors is the trade name used by two separate registered broker-dealers: Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC, and Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, LLC, Members SIPC, non-bank affiliates of Wells Fargo & Company. © 2009 Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC. All rights reserved. 0809-3934 (08/09)



IN A CLEAR NEW WORLD

YOU CAN SEE THE FAR END OF EVERY SUPPLY CHAIN

It's a paradox: as the world gets smaller, supply chains keep getting longer. With partners in more places and customers on every continent, today's best-run businesses need end-to-end visibility like never before. And they're turning to SAP® to help them get there. With business software, they're transforming rigid chains into agile business networks that act collaboratively, in concert, and in real time. It's how business gets done in a clear new world. **Start the journey. Visit sap.com/clear or call 866-255-0675.**

THE BEST-RUN BUSINESSES RUN SAP™

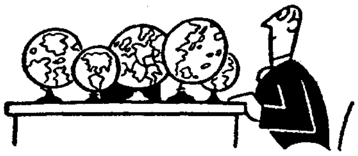
SAP®

© 2009 SAP AG. SAP and the SAP logo are trademarks and registered trademarks of SAP AG in Germany and several other countries.

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

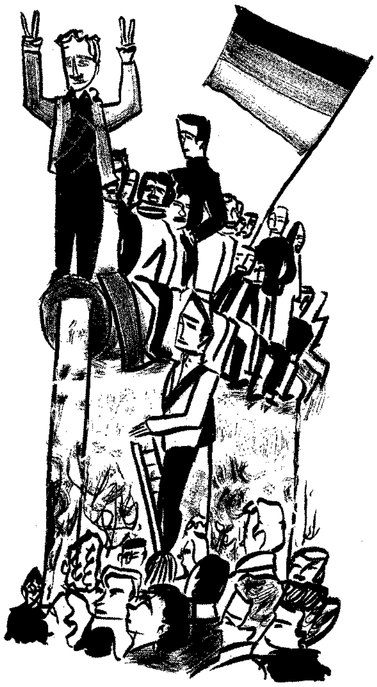
COMMENT
NOVEMBER 9TH



Germany observes no official holiday on November 9th, the day when, twenty years ago, crowds of stunned, delirious East Germans breached the Berlin Wall. This is because November 9th is also the date on which Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated, in 1918, two days before Germany's defeat in the First World War. On November 9, 1923, Hitler attempted to overthrow the Weimar Republic, in the Munich Beer Hall Putsch. In 1938, November 9th was the Night of Broken Glass, when Nazi gangs attacked Jews and their property across Germany and Austria, foreshadowing the genocide to come. The German calendar is appropriately inconvenient: nothing good is conserved without the active remembrance of something bad. The British writer Timothy Garton Ash has called 1989 the best year in European history. It delivered the Continent from its worst century—the new democratic European unity that began in 1989 was built on fifty million graves.

The chain reaction of nonviolent civic movements in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia seemed like a miracle at the time, and it still does. Anyone who grew up knowing nothing but the Cold War could scarcely imagine that the world wasn't eternally locked in permafrost. No Hegelian teleology predetermined that Communism would be left on the ash heap of history. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama published his essay "The End of History?," in which he predicted "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." This proved far too optimistic for the post-Cold War world, and even in Central Europe, where liberal democracy did emerge, the dramatic events that brought it about were messier and chancier than the dreams of neo-conservative philosophers.

The wall came down not because Ronald Reagan stood up and demanded it but because on the evening of November 9th, at a televised press conference in East Berlin, a Party hack named Günter Schabowski flubbed a question about the regime's new, liberalized travel regulations. Asked when they took effect, Schabowski shrugged, scratched his head, checked some papers, and said, "Immediately," sending thousands of East Berliners to the wall in a human tide that the German Democratic Republic could not control. Soldiers and Stasi agents didn't shoot into the crowd, but things could easily have gone otherwise.



The revolutions of 1989 were made possible by a multiplicity of conditions: the courage of East Bloc dissidents and the hundreds of thousands of fellow-citizens who finally joined them; American support for the dissident movements and containment of the Soviet Union; the disastrous economies of the Communist countries; the loss of confidence among ruling-party élites; the crucial forbearance of Mikhail Gorbachev. For Europe's Communist regimes to disappear so suddenly and bloodlessly (Romania was a different story), everything had to fall into place, above and below, within and without. Such circumstances are improbably rare, and they can't be mechanically replicated by the laws of history or by divine design or by universal human aspiration. A false lesson drawn from 1989 involves a kind of shallow eschatology of totalitarianism: this is how it always happens—the people rise up, the regime withers and dies, peace and democracy reign. The chaos that followed the overthrow of Saddam Hussein was in part a conse-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

quence of this thinking. In planning the postwar period in Iraq, George W. Bush and some of his advisers had 1989 in mind—"like Eastern Europe with Arabs," as one official put it.

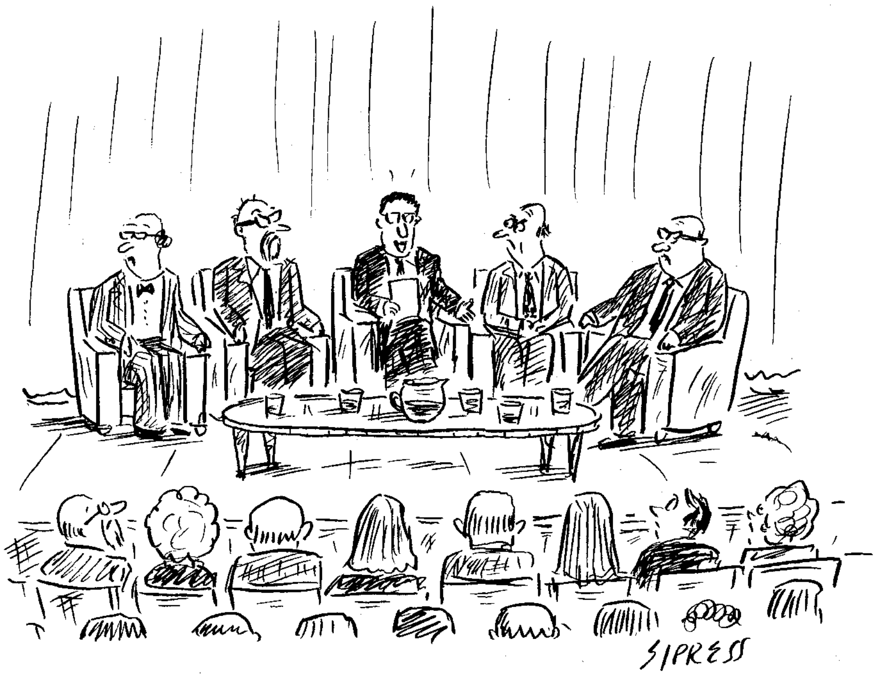
The last, briefest, and most thrilling of that year's peaceful uprisings, the Velvet Revolution, took place in Czechoslovakia. Over the next two decades, it produced a series of successors and imitators in Serbia, Ukraine, and Georgia. While they all improved the politics of their respective countries, none of them had a Václav Havel, and none of them created a stable liberal democracy. Whenever things fail to turn out as they did in Central Europe, people tend to react as if history had unaccountably malfunctioned. But if 1989 were the rule and not the exception, then Burmese, Chinese, and Zimbabwean dissidents—who have sacrificed far more than their European counterparts (in China, 1989 meant Tiananmen Square)—would be in power by now.

Perhaps the closest contemporary analogy to the fall of Communism is the democratic movement that is challenging the Islamic Republic of Iran. It has deep social and intellectual roots, a growing mass following, and an enemy state with a hollowed-out ideology. But, unlike the East German soldiers and the Stasi agents, the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij militia are ready to kill. Behind President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, there is no restraining figure like Gorbachev. Iranians will have to find their own way to the fulfillment of their democratic desires. And yet the fact that the nearest counterparts to the thinkers and activists of 1989 are to be found in a non-Western, Muslim country exposes another false lesson of that year: that such things are for Westerners only, that "they" don't want what "we" want.

A recent Pew poll shows that Germans, Czechs, and Poles remain relatively enthusiastic about democracy and capitalism; Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Lithuanians less so. Former East Germans' hopes of achieving the living standards of their Western countrymen have not been fulfilled, and the inevitable disappointments have muted anniversary celebrations. Last month in Dresden, a retired schoolteacher acknowledged the pining of some East Germans for their simpler, cozier former lives under state socialism. There's even a neologism for it: *Ostalgie.* But, the teacher said, "What matters is that I can talk with an American journalist without going to jail, that I can travel without filling out forms, that I can read what I want to read, that I'm not told what TV station I can watch and not watch, that at school I don't have to say something that I don't say in private at home. This is what is decisive to me today."

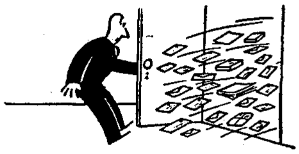
Twenty years after the revolutions of 1989, Europe's bitter half century of armed division is the object of profitable kitsch. At Checkpoint Charlie, in central Berlin, where an East German guard opened the gate at 11:17 P.M. that November 9th, you can now pay a euro to pose with hucksters wearing Soviet, British, French, and American uniforms. Neighborhoods that used to be separated by the wall have become hotbeds of the art scene, the gay scene, and the club scene. Meanwhile, Germans widely regarded the recent election campaign, in which fundamental issues were avoided, as a snooze. Berlin will never again be the hair-trigger focus of global ideological conflict, and Europe's place at the center of modern history is over. This proves not the failure of 1989 but, rather, its astounding success. No one is prepared to die for European unity, and no one will have to.

—*George Packer*



"The subject of tonight's discussion is: Why are there no women on this panel?"

OVERDOGS
PERFECT PAPER



Early last Friday, at the end of a week during which New Yorkers paying attention both to mayoral politics and to major-league baseball were taught, twice over, to disregard the lessons of romantic comedy (as it turns out, the guy with a lot of money does fairly well against the other guy, even if the other guy is kind of cute and is in fact not that poor), a convoy of vehicles prepared to pull out of a depot on Washington Street, carrying four hundred bags of shredded paper. It was five in the morning, and that is when, once or twice a decade, Steven Josefsberg, an ex-cop and the vice-president of operations at the Downtown Alliance, makes deliveries of paper shreddings to lower Broadway, in lieu of ticker tape, which has been obsolete since the sixties. He gives away parade paper in its ideal form: lightweight, recycled, and reduced to strips that are an inch wide. He had half a ton of it, which was not enough to supply the Yankees Victory Parade in full—thirty-five tons of paper was expected to fall that day—but it existed to set a good example. "If you can teach a man to make confetti, he'll have confetti for a lifetime. If you give him all the confetti, he'll throw that out of the window," Josefsberg said, losing faith in this construction only at the very end.

Before Tuesday's election, the city seemed to have concluded that the incumbent Mayor's defeat or victory would be equally galling. The World Series success of the Yankees did not inspire such Bloombergian diffidence, even in the minds of uncommitteds—but there were those who found themselves comparing one orderly, overdog success with the other, and noting the almost indecent superfluousness of attacks made on their opponents (the *Post* on "the Frillies"; Bloomberg on Bill Thompson). After Wednesday night, it was proper to celebrate, but excitement was easy to contain, as at a birthday in middle age, or a champagne party in a weatherized Yankees locker room where the players have donned protective goggles before the first cork has been popped.

Best-practice ticker tape perhaps fitted the mood. Josefsberg and his colleagues make the case that a paper free-for-all carries risks of accidental disclosure of confidential information, and—in the heat of the moment—the defenestration of a pencil cup. Josefsberg considered for a moment those blocks of computer printing paper, now seldom used, where one sheet is connected to another in an eternal zigzag. A fan might throw this down onto Broadway, keeping hold of one end, expecting it to "unfurl in some miraculous way," he said, and the finger of his right hand spiralled to the floor like a sycamore seed. That doesn't happen. The paper tears along one of its perforations. "You're left holding three sheets, and the stack hits the ground at sixty miles an hour," Josefsberg said, striking the pose of a man who, with three sheets of computer paper between his fingers, realizes that he has just killed Neil Armstrong.

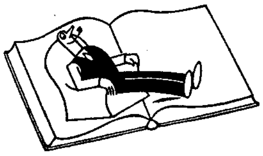
Josefsberg and his men, perhaps using their walkie-talkies more than was strictly necessary, drove out from the depot, to start the tricky process of delivering what looked like—and was—trash to the handsome marble and bronze lobbies between Battery Park and City Hall. Of thirty-two commercial buildings on the parade route, twenty had accepted the offer of free paper. (The others had sealed their windows or their hearts.) But not all building managers had passed on the message to those who work in their lobbies at five in the morning. And, at the start of the route, the Woolworth Building's reluctance to take six bags of shredded paper looked for a moment likely to inspire violence. Men shouted at one another in the dark. The doorman took down the phone number printed on the side of Josefsberg's truck. "And so it goes," Josefsberg said, climbing back in.

Along the length of lower Broadway, two hundred and one granite plaques in the sidewalk mark, in chronological order, the sequence of ticker-tape parades, from the first (1886) to the last (2008). Moving south, Josefsberg was retreating from the present, as he dropped off at 222 Broadway (with a plaque marking the parade for the U.S. hostages; 1981), 217 Broadway (Nelson Mandela; 1990), and on down to 26 Broadway (Captain Hermann Koehl and his crew, longest westbound transatlantic flight; 1928), which took six bags without complaint.

As Josefsberg finished his deliveries, the sky was growing lighter and Broadway began to fill up, revealing the extent to which the paper of choice, at ground level, had been bought in packs of four at Duane Reade, to be thrown across the street, over the heads of police officers. As a tall, flushed young man explained, "Toilet paper and Heineken—that's what New York *does!*" When the parade was over, it was hard to find a trace of Josefsberg's perfect paper. Instead, there were design documents connected to the World Trade Center Transportation Hub, a flyer from Jews for Jesus, half of a *Traders* magazine, a scrap of a legal document ("Plaintiff's mot . . ."), a paper plate, and a page of medical records—the name and the details of a serious condition of a fifty-year-old man in Fairfield, Connecticut.

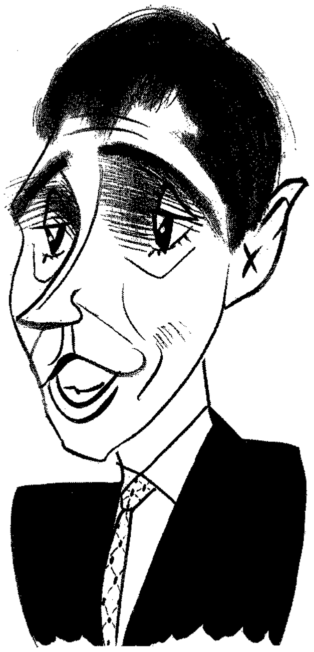
—*Ian Parker*

POLITICAL NOTES
GAP YEAR



A year after he stood to the side of the stage at Grant Park and watched his client, the newly elected President, declare America "a place where all things are possible," the political strategist and steel-eyed disciplinarian David Plouffe was relaxing over eggs and coffee in Lansky's, a "classic Jewish deli" on the West Side. (Scare quotes necessary because the joint is owned by a guy named Ruggerio, employs an "executive chef," and features a fried frankfurter called a Devil Dog.)

It was the morning after the off-year no-big-deal election—quiet, sunny, unspecial. Obama's surrogates in Virginia and New Jersey had been walloped by a couple of Republican mediocrities, and no one knew what to make, really, of Michael Bloomberg, who had to award every citizen of the five boroughs a pot of silver, three chickens, and the keys to a pink Cadillac in order to beat a guy named Whatsis by forty-seven votes.



David Plouffe

During the 2008 campaign, Plouffe wore the wired and haunted look of a marathoner bleeding in his shoes. Late at night, in order not to wake his wife, he would lock himself in the bathroom to talk on conference calls with Obama, David Axelrod, and Robert Gibbs—the inner core of the campaign. Starting out, the odds were so long that Plouffe doubted Obama would run. Even now, he said, "If you ran the Democratic primaries a hundred times, Clinton probably wins ninety-five times. It's hard when you have to live your life the whole time with one focus: beating them, beating them, beating them."

It infuriated him to see Clinton slogging it out for months after the pundits had counted to ten. In his frustration, Plouffe often thought Clinton was deluded, living in an "alternate universe" in which she still thought victory was possible. Long after Obama had got past the bruises of the battle with Clinton, Plouffe nursed his resentments. "I'm a warrior, so it was hard for me to put down the sword," he said. But things settled down quickly after Obama won the Presidency. Plouffe rebuffed Obama's blandishments to work in the White House. His wife, Olivia Morgan, gave birth to their second child three days after the victory. He "re-bunkered" with his family.

At breakfast, Plouffe looked positively serene as he talked about the Amazon ranking for his inevitable campaign memoir, "The Audacity to Win." Last year, he suffered from the meth nerves of a man wired to his BlackBerry; now he was engaged in the leisurely concerns of a literary man, warily anticipating the competition on Grub Street. "You've got Sarah Palin coming out in two weeks"—with her book, "Going Rogue"—"and you've got Andre Agassi"—an actual, if occasional, meth consumer, it appears—coming out with a memoir of his own. Naturally, Palin seemed to him of greater interest.

"I guess we'll find out her version of events in about two weeks, right?" Plouffe said. "I think in the last, let's say, generation the two political books that sold best were Bill's and Hillary's, right? Supposedly, this is going to blow both of them away. It's remarkable. She's going to sell maybe over two million books."

Plouffe may regret Palin's oxygen consumption on the book-tour publicity trail, but he seemed to welcome her as a Presidential candidate in 2012. "I think it would be catastrophic for them to nominate her," he said. "A lot can change, but I doubt she'll run. Right now, in terms of her ability to sell books and get speaking fees and just go out there and be a prominent voice in the Republican Party, she's at a pretty high level. But if you run a race you're going to get nicked up and you may fall from grace."

Plouffe said the obvious characters like Mike Huckabee and Mitt Romney were around, but "we ought to learn from the Obama experience that someone can come out, not someone you've never heard of but someone who you just didn't think would run for President."

Nothing has trained Plouffe to anticipate the unexpected more than his experience with Barack Obama. "We all lived with absolute knowledge how strong [Hillary Clinton] was and how unlikely our victory was," he said. "It wasn't like, in the beginning, we said, 'We know something no one else knows—this is going to be kryptonite that's going to really bring her to her knees.'"

Plouffe is taking it easy: having moved with his family from Chicago to Washington, he's writing and doing a little organizing, a little spinning and informal high-level advising, but none of it with the intensity of the campaign he conducted or the White House he refused. "If, a couple of years down the road, there is need for me, inside or outside, I am obviously going to strap the uniform back on," he said. "My wife and I count the days: we're a year into our two-year bout of freedom."

—*David Remnick*

STOPOVER

GUITAR WHISPERING

Robert Earl Keen, the Texas-based songwriter and performer, plays New York a couple of times a year, usually with four band members, who occupy all his spare time in the city. "Either I'm herdin' them, to make sure they show up at the gig, or they're leading me around afterwards," Keen, who is fifty-three, said the other day. "Our steel player's brother is a New Yorker. He just points, like, 'We're goin' this way.' I love it when a New Yorker points like that. All you got to do is follow."

But for his recent gig at Town Hall Keen found himself without his usual band, and so he had the chance to do something he'd always wanted to do: visit Mandolin Brothers, the vintage-instrument store on Staten Island. He wasn't actively in the market for a guitar, Keen said, but "I've always said—'A man can't have too many guitars or too many shotguns.'" He has about twenty-five of each.

Arriving at South Ferry late in the morning, Keen—a tall man, with a handsome smile, a steady gaze, and a gray goatee, and wearing Levi's, cowboy boots, and a brown Mesquite jacket—looked around for some coffee. He'd got to bed at 4 A.M., he said, having come down from Boston in the tour bus. "They don't let you park the tour buses overnight in Manhattan anymore," he explained, "and it takes time to get all your stuff out."

Keen plays about a hundred and thirty shows a year, which means he's on the road for a hundred and eighty days. "And then there's ten days of doing laundry when I get home," he said. When he isn't touring, Keen lives in Kerrville, outside Austin, with his wife and two daughters. Currently, he is promoting his most recent album, "The Rose Hotel," which was released at the end of September, and was selling well, he said, "for me"—seven thousand units in the first week. "My fifteen-year-old saw me ranked on iTunes and came running to tell me. 'Dad, you're No. 42!'" The album contains songs that will appeal to both ends of Keen's passionate but bifurcated fan base—the thinkers, who savor the wordplay in Keen's lyrics, and the frat boys, who want to get drunk and shout along with the party songs.

Keen writes his songs in what he calls his Scriptorium, a one-room shack about fifteen miles from his house, out in the middle of the prairie, where he's got a fire pit, a fold-down prison bed ("the kind with chains"), and a couple of guitars. He strums chords, and hopes something will emerge. "Some guitars are better for writing songs than others," he said. "Some guitars just seem to have songs in them."

It was a fine autumn morning, and after the rains of the previous day the blue-green waters of New York Harbor were flat and smooth, as if oiled. "Man, this is great!" Keen exclaimed as the ferry reached the other side. "So relaxing."

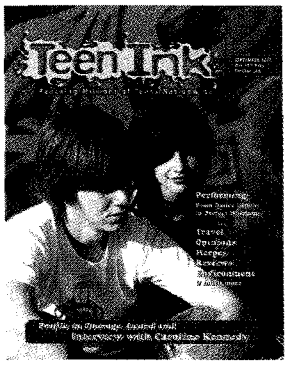
Stan Jay, the garrulous, white-bearded, longtime owner of Mandolin Brothers, was pleased to see Keen, and offered to show him around. "There are nine hundred instruments here, and you can play every one," he said. "Each one has a story, and I speak guitar, so I'll interpret. We'll go this way." Jay pointed toward the vintage-instrument room. Keen just followed.

Jay is a walking Wiki on guitars. He

Advertisement

fall showcase

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT NEW PRODUCTS AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

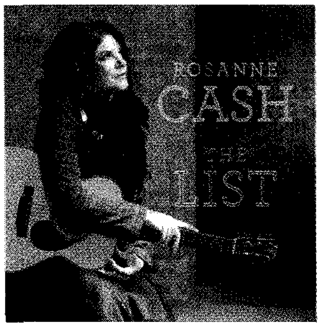


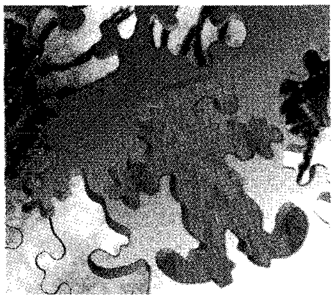
Teen Ink is a monthly magazine, now in its twenty-first year, written entirely by teens and for teens. Each issue includes fiction; nonfiction; poetry; opinions; movie, music, and book reviews; and more. It has been called "*The New Yorker* for Teens" by VOYA.

To subscribe, visit the Web site **www.teenink.com.**

"The List" features songs from a list of essential country songs passed on to her by her legendary father, Johnny Cash. With guests Elvis Costello, Bruce Springsteen, Jeff Tweedy, and Rufus Wainwright.

MAN
HAT
TAN





The Rolls-Royce of Wooden Jigsaw Puzzles

Jigsaw puzzling soars to new heights of artistry in the hands of a Stave crafter! The perfect gift for those who have everything. Enjoy an additional 10% off your entire puzzle order. Enter coupon code NYeR in our online store or call Stave and mention this ad.

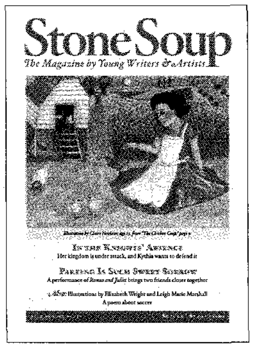
www.StavePuzzles.com
802.295.5200

Stave
a fitting challenge
handcrafted wooden jigsaw
PUZZLES

"*The New Yorker* of the 8-to-13 set."
—*Ms.*

This beautiful children's magazine makes a great gift for budding writers and artists! Six issues for $37.

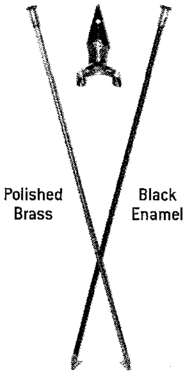
800.447.4569
www.stonesoup.com

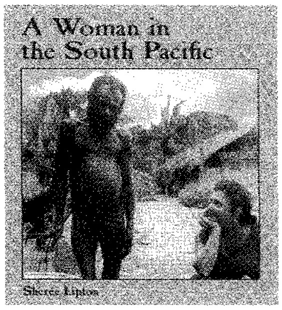


THE ORIGINAL BRASS
Blo-Poke
The Essential Fireplace Tool

Handcrafted in New England since 1941, the 46-inch-long Blo-Poke is ideal for starting or rekindling the blaze in your fireplace. Available in finely polished brass or in fireplace-black enamel.

Visit **www.blopoke.com** or call **800.601.6642.**

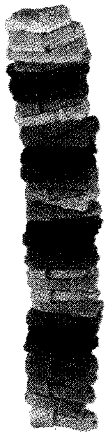




"The South Pacific travel book of the year."
—*David Stanley, SouthPacific.org*

An extraordinary coming-of-age journey through the South Pacific by the photojournalist Sherée Lipton. A nostalgic, beautifully illustrated memoir.

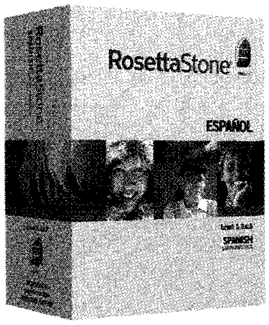
Amazon.com
SouthPacificWoman.com
808.262.6448



Imagine the joy of winter in Golightly Cashmere's famous Watchcap. Four layers of six-ply cashmere at the ears, without the slightest itch or scratch. Hand-loomed in Taos, N.M., of 100% pure Scottish cashmere yarns.

www.golightlycashmere.com

Golightly
Cashmere



Experience for yourself how easy and fun it can be to learn a new language with Rosetta Stone.

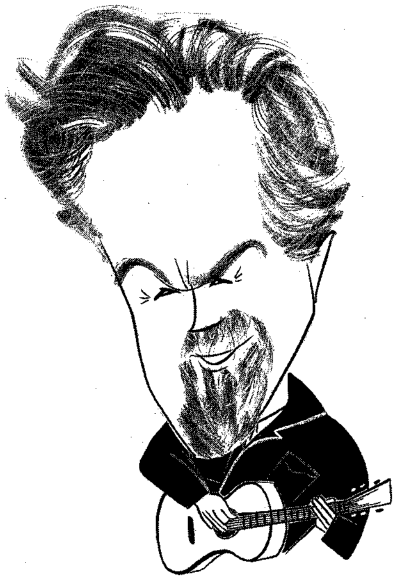
To save 10% today, call **866.815.3508** or visit **www.RosettaStone.com/nys109a.**

RosettaStone

placed a couple of unusual ones, crafted by independent luthiers, in Keen's hands. Then he carefully took down from the wall "an adorable artifact of a prior civilization"—an 1860 Martin parlor guitar that survived the burning of Richmond, at the end of the Civil War. Keen strummed it for a while, noting that the neck was the same as his 1935 Washburn, one of his prized possessions.

Finally, Jay handed Keen a Martin 000-45, one of only two hundred and sixty-five ever made, from 1930. Keen strummed it once, cocked his head, and then asked for a pick.

"You know what I said about some guitars just having songs in them?" he said. "This is one of them." Keen's fingers moved over the strings, but the rest of him seemed to float toward the ceiling.



Robert Earl Keen

"How much?" he asked, when he'd finished playing.

"Sixty-five thousand."

"Damn, I always go for the most expensive guitar in the place, and after that nothing else sounds as good."

Jay said the guitar was on hold for someone else, but "I could notify you if he doesn't want it."

"Yeah, right. Maybe you could also notify my banker."

"Certainly," Jay said. "And your wife. I'm good with wives. Do you want to call her now?" Jay pointed toward the phone in the next room. But Keen knew better than to follow him there.

—John Seabrook

DEPT. OF COLLECTION

SEEDY

Last month, Kew Gardens, in London, received a healthy sample of Yunnan banana seeds, from southwest China, and announced that Phase I of the Millennium Seed Bank project was complete: ten per cent of the earth's wild-plant species have now been frozen for posterity in a kind of botanical Noah's Ark, safe from global warming and longhorn beetles and strip miners. "It's, like, the Louvre of the seed-bank world," Edward Toth, the director of the Greenbelt Native Plant Center, on Staten Island, said the other day of Kew. Toth, who is known in certain Parks Department circles as Seedman, was standing in the living room of an old white farmhouse that serves as Greenbelt HQ. If Kew is the Louvre, Greenbelt, which abuts the Fresh Kills Landfill, is more like a regional Chase branch, stocking plentiful supplies of acorns and black walnuts for near-term circulation, along with more exotic currency reserves: about fourteen hundred accessions, some of them rare and threatened local flora.

"I am not Seedman—I am Bureaucratman," Toth said, before introducing several of his seed-collecting deputies and associates. One held a basket of persimmons, freshly gathered from the southern tip of Staten Island. "This is an example of a southern species that reaches its absolute northern boundary in the area," Toth said. His supervisor Bram Gunther, a.k.a. Dogwood, after his favorite tree, popped a persimmon in his mouth, grimaced, and spat it out.

"Do any of you remember that old Bruce Dern movie, where he actually takes the last couple of trees, puts 'em in some glass spaceship, and rotates around the Earth?" a Parks Department spokeswoman asked. They did not, although Gunther, while still on the subject of trees, praised the pin oak as the most durable of the native New Yorkers, as opposed to those ubiquitous immigrants the London planes and the Norway maples. The city, via Greenbelt and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, is responsible for seventy-five plant species on the Millennium ark: silk grass, beach plum, anise-scented goldenrod. Absent from the list, by philosophical design, are arrivistes like those pungent Upper West Side ginkgoes or the mugwort shrubs that choke the Park. Four of the five boroughs are represented (sorry, Queens), although the majority of the chosen species are Bridge and Tunnel plants—imported, like commuters, from their contemporary suburban habitats in New Jersey and Long Island, having long since been priced or frightened out of the city.

Outside, on a picnic table, was a deer skull, like a talisman to ward off trouble. Deer represent the latest ecological gentrifiers. "They were absent from Staten Island for at least a century," Toth said. "The pressure on the populations in New Jersey has become so severe that they're actually back-migrating through industrialized New Jersey, swimming down the Raritan River and across the Arthur Kill. They must have felt like they'd arrived in Eden when they came to Staten Island." *Vaccinium stamineum*, or deerberry (a shrub), is among the seventy-five archival species in Seedman's New York.

Toth led a group over to a low-slung building that houses the Greenbelt seed bank: a walk-in refrigerator with an industrial dehumidifier on top. "We actually collected this along a railroad at the end of Victory Boulevard," a young woman said, pointing to a dish of seeds from a trailing wild bean (a vine with pink flowers). "And for this we were up to our knees in a swamp," she added, gesturing toward a dish containing seeds from a swamp-dock plant (a tall, leafy species). Intrepid seed hunting can also lead to an expertise in spotting rogue plantings of *Cannabis sativa*. "Especially in the more deserted parts of the city, we find a lot of marijuana growers rather actively doing their thing," Toth said. Don't let their appearance fool you: the Greenbelt crew is against invasive species.

A bearded man retrieved a small manila envelope and began shaking into his open palm poverty-oatgrass seeds, gathered from a scraggly grass growing at the north end of Central Park, near the Blockhouse. "Almost everything in Central Park is planted, but that's a grass that clearly has been there since the glaciers retreated," Toth said. A few of the seeds slipped through the man's fingers, and the young woman gasped. "Every last seed is a possible plant," she said.

—Ben McGrath

help2cherish

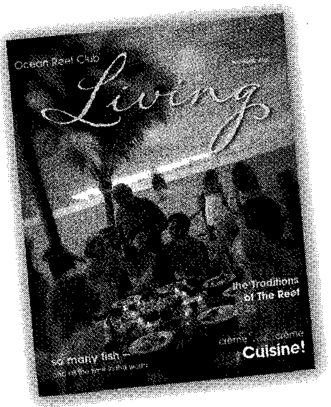
Investing involves risk. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.
Merrill Lynch Wealth Management makes available products and services offered by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (MLPF&S)
and other subsidiaries of Bank of America Corporation. MLPF&S is a registered broker-dealer and Member SIPC.
Banking products are provided by Bank of America, N.A. and affiliated banks, Members FDIC and wholly owned subsidiaries of Bank of America Corporation.
Investment products: Are Not FDIC Insured | Are Not Bank Guaranteed | May Lose Value | © 2009 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved. AR-92434. 10/2009

Transferring wealth can be complicated. A Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor can help you construct an investment strategy to help you leave the legacy you've earned. Learn more at ml.com/help2

Merrill Lynch
Wealth Management
Bank of America Corporation

Our members
return each year
as faithfully as the tides.

Now you too are invited for a rare visit to our legendary private club ... through the pages of *Ocean Reef Club Living.*

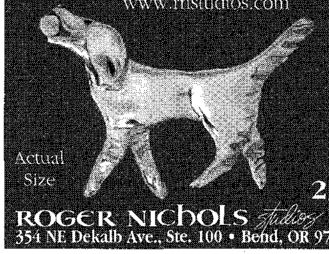


Visit our website to request your copy or call our Membership Department to explore the possibilities of a guest stay.

www.OceanReefClubLiving.com • 305.367.5921

OCEAN REEF CLUB®
A UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE
KEY LARGO, FLORIDA

Golden Retriever
www.rnstudios.com



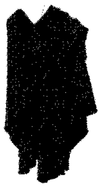
Actual Size

Sterling Silver
$ 55.00
14k Gold
$ 395.00
Velvet Box
800-235-0471
S/H $5.75

ROGER NICHOLS *studios*
354 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701

SKYLAND TRAIL
Offering hope, changing lives
Nationally recognized center of excellence providing high quality treatment for adults with mental illness.
www.skylandtrail.org

Shawls & Capes
Our hand-crafted capes and shawls embrace you in the elegance and comfort of 100% Merino Wool and 100% Cashmere.
The Casco Bay Shawl--
Wool **$195** Cashmere **On Sale! $350**



CB
CASCO BAY WOOL WORKS
call to order: 1-888-222-9665
www.cascobaywoolworks.com

A distinctive psychiatric hospital
AUSTEN RIGGS CENTER
Intensive psychotherapy in an open community.
Stockbridge, MA | AustenRiggs.org | 800-51-RIGGS

ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

DEFENDING THE ARSENAL

In an unstable Pakistan, can nuclear warheads be kept safe?

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

In the tumultuous days leading up to the Pakistan Army's ground offensive in the tribal area of South Waziristan, which began on October 17th, the Pakistani Taliban attacked what should have been some of the country's best-guarded targets. In the most brazen strike, ten gunmen penetrated the Army's main headquarters, in Rawalpindi, instigating a twenty-two-hour standoff that left twenty-three dead and the military thoroughly embarrassed. The terrorists had been dressed in Army uniforms. There were also attacks on police installations in Peshawar and Lahore, and, once the offensive began, an Army general was shot dead by gunmen on motorcycles on the streets of Islamabad, the capital. The assassins clearly had advance knowledge of the general's route, indicating that they had contacts and allies inside the security forces.

Pakistan has been a nuclear power for two decades, and has an estimated eighty to a hundred warheads, scattered in facilities around the country. The success of the latest attacks raised an obvious question: Are the bombs safe? Asked this question the day after the Rawalpindi raid, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, "We have confidence in the Pakistani government and the military's control over nuclear weapons." Clinton—whose own visit to Pakistan, two weeks later, would be disrupted by more terrorist bombs—added that, despite the attacks by the Taliban, "we see no evidence that they are going to take over the state."

Clinton's words sounded reassuring, and several current and former officials also said in interviews that the Pakistan Army was in full control of the nuclear arsenal. But the Taliban overrunning Islamabad is not the only, or even the greatest, concern. The principal fear is mutiny—that extremists inside the Pakistani military might stage a coup, take control of some nuclear assets, or even divert a warhead.

On April 29th, President Obama was asked at a news conference whether he could reassure the American people that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal could be kept away from terrorists. Obama's answer remains the clearest delineation of the Administration's public posture. He was, he said, "gravely concerned" about the fragility of the civilian government of President Asif Ali Zardari. "Their biggest threat right now comes internally," Obama said. "We have huge . . . national-security interests in making sure that Pakistan is stable and that you don't end up having a nuclear-armed militant state." The United States, he said, could "make sure that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is secure—primarily, initially, because the Pakistan Army, I think, recognizes the hazards of those weapons' falling into the wrong hands."

The questioner, Chuck Todd, of NBC, began asking whether the American military could, if necessary, move in and secure Pakistan's bombs. Obama did not let Todd finish. "I'm not going to engage in hypotheticals of that sort," he said. "I feel confident that the nuclear arsenal will remain out of militant hands. O.K.?"

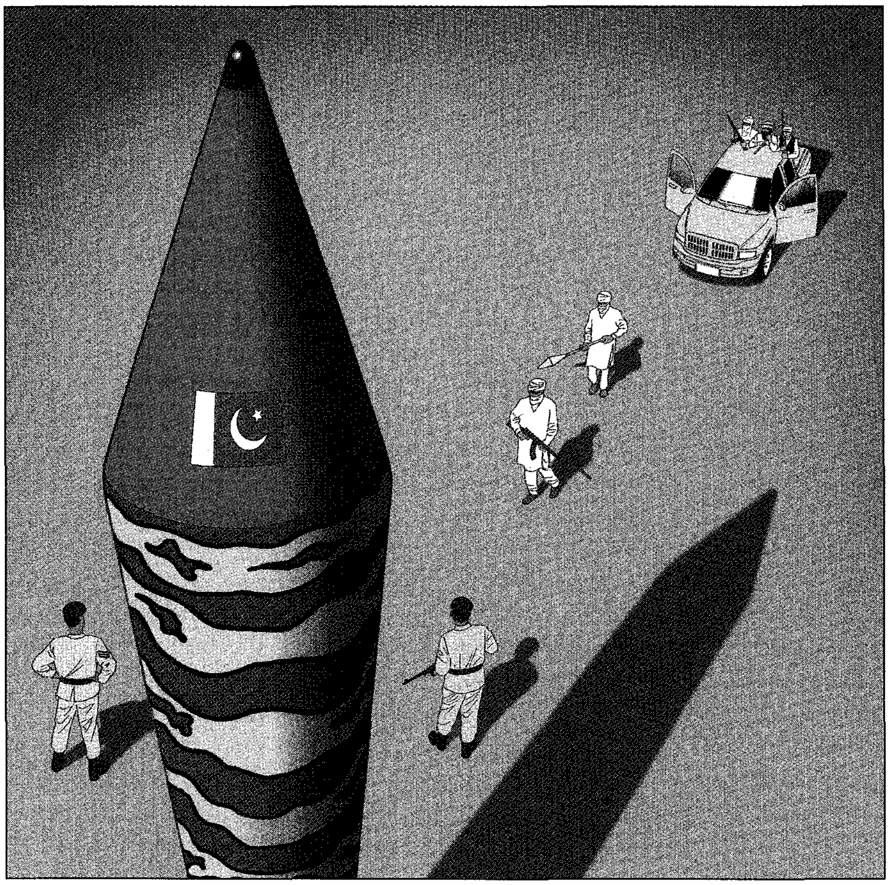
Obama did not say so, but current and former officials said in interviews in Washington and Pakistan that his Administration has been negotiating highly sensitive understandings with the Pakistani military. These would allow specially trained American units to provide added security for the Pakistani arsenal in case of a crisis. At the same time, the Pakistani military would be given money to equip and train Pakistani soldiers and to improve their housing and facilities—goals that General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, the chief of the Pakistan Army, has long desired. In June, Congress approved a four-hundred-million-dollar request for what the Administration called the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund, providing immediate assistance to the Pakistan Army for equipment, training, and "renovation and construction."

The secrecy surrounding the understandings was important because there is growing antipathy toward America in Pakistan, as well as a history of distrust. Many Pakistanis believe that America's true goal is not to keep their weapons safe but to diminish or destroy the Pakistani nuclear complex. The arsenal is a source of great pride among Pakistanis, who view the weapons as symbols of their nation's status and as an essential deterrent against an attack by India. (India's first nuclear test took place in 1974, Pakistan's in 1998.)

A senior Pakistani official who has close ties to Zardari exploded with anger during an interview when the subject turned to the American demands for more information about the arsenal. After the September 11th attacks, he said, there had been an understanding between the Bush Administration and then President Pervez Musharraf "over what Pakistan had and did not have." Today, he said, "you'd like control of our day-to-day deployment. But why should we give it to you? Even if there was a military coup d'état in Pakistan, no one is going to give up total control of our nuclear weapons. Never. Why are you not afraid of *India's* nuclear weapons?" the official asked. "Because India is your friend, and the longtime policies of America and India converge. Between you and the Indians, you will fuck us in every way. The truth is that our weapons are less of a problem for the Obama Administration than finding a respectable way out of Afghanistan."

The ongoing consultation on nuclear security between Washington and Islamabad intensified after the announcement in March of President Obama's so-called Af-Pak policy, which called upon the Pakistan Army to take more aggressive action against Taliban enclaves inside Pakistan. I was told that the understandings on nuclear coöperation benefitted from the increasingly close relationship between Admiral Michael Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Kayani, his counterpart, although the C.I.A. and the Departments of Defense, State, and Energy have also been involved. (All three departments declined to comment for this article. The national-security council and the C.I.A. denied that there were any agreements in place.)

In response to a series of questions, Admiral Mullen acknowledged that he and Kayani were, in his spokesman's words, "very close." The spokesman said that Mullen is deeply involved in day-to-day Pakistani developments and "is almost an action officer for all things Pakistan." But he denied that he and Kayani, or their staffs, had reached an understanding about the availability of American forces in case of mutiny or a terrorist threat to a nuclear facility. "To my knowledge, we have no military units, special forces or otherwise, involved in such an assignment," Mullen said through his spokesman. The spokesman added that Mullen had not seen any evidence of growing fundamentalism inside the Pakistani military. In a news conference on May 4th, however, Mullen responded to a query about growing radicalism in Pakistan by saying that "what has clearly happened over the [past] twelve months is the continual decline, gradual decline, in security." The Admiral also spoke openly about the increased coöperation on nuclear security between the United States and Pakistan: "I know what we've done over the last three years, specifically to both invest, assist, and I've watched them improve their security fairly dramatically. . . . I've looked at this, you know, as hard as I can, over a period of time." Seventeen days later, he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "We have invested a significant amount of resources through the Department of Energy in the last several years" to help Pakistan improve the controls on its arsenal. "They still have to improve them," he said.



America's dealings with Pakistan may be increasing the risk of radicalization.

GUY BILLOUT

In interviews in Pakistan, I obtained confirmation that there were continuing conversations with the United States on nuclear-security plans—as well as evidence that the Pakistani leadership put much less weight on them than the Americans did. In some cases, Pakistani officials spoke of the talks principally as a means of placating anxious American politicians. "You needed it," a senior Pakistani official, who said that he had been briefed on the nuclear issue, told me. His tone was caustic. "We have twenty thousand people working in the nuclear-weapons industry in Pakistan, and here is this American view that Pakistan is bound to fail." The official added, "The Americans are saying, 'We want to help protect your weapons.' We say, 'Fine. Tell us what you can do for us.' It's part of a quid pro quo. You say, also, 'Come clean on the nuclear program and we'll insure that India doesn't put pressure on it.' So we say, 'O.K.' "

But, the Pakistani official said, "both sides are lying to each other." The information that the Pakistanis handed over was not as complete as the Americans believed. "We haven't told you anything that you don't know," he said. The Americans didn't realize that Pakistan would never cede control of its arsenal: "If you try to take the weapons away, you will fail."

High-level coöperation between Islamabad and Washington on the Pakistani nuclear arsenal began at least eight years ago. Former President Musharraf, when I interviewed him in London recently, acknowledged that his government had held extensive discussions with the Bush Administration after the September 11th attacks, and had given State Department nonproliferation experts insight into the command and control of the Pakistani arsenal and its on-site safety and security procedures. Musharraf also confirmed that Pakistan had constructed a huge tunnel system for the transport and storage of nuclear weaponry. "The tunnels are so deep that a nuclear attack will not touch them," Musharraf told me, with obvious pride. The tunnels would make it impossible for the American intelligence community—"Big Uncle," as a Pakistani nuclear-weapons expert called it—to monitor the movements of nuclear components by satellite.

Safeguards have been built into the system. Pakistani nuclear doctrine calls for the warheads (containing an enriched radioactive core) and their triggers (sophisticated devices containing highly explosive lenses, detonators, and krytrons) to be stored separately from each other and from their delivery devices (missiles or aircraft). The goal is to insure that no one can launch a warhead—in the heat of a showdown with India, for example—without pausing to put it together. Final authority to order a nuclear strike requires consensus within Pakistan's ten-member National Command Authority, with the chairman—by statute, President Zardari—casting the deciding vote.

But the safeguards meant to keep a confrontation with India from escalating too quickly could make the arsenal more vulnerable to terrorists. Nuclear-security experts have war-gamed the process and concluded that the triggers and other elements are most exposed when they are being moved and reassembled—at those moments there would be fewer barriers between an outside group and the bomb. A consultant to the intelligence community said that in one war-gamed scenario disaffected members of the Pakistani military could instigate a terrorist attack inside India, and that the ensuing crisis would give them "a chance to pick up bombs and triggers—in the name of protecting the assets from extremists."

The triggers are a key element in American contingency plans. An American former senior intelligence official said that a team that has trained for years to remove or dismantle parts of the Pakistani arsenal has now been augmented by a unit of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), the élite counterterrorism group. He added that the unit, which had earlier focussed on the warheads' cores, has begun to concentrate on evacuating the triggers, which have no radioactive material and are thus much easier to handle.

"The Pakistanis gave us a virtual look at the number of warheads, some of their locations, and their command-and-control system," the former senior intelligence official told me. "We saw their target list and their mobilization plans. We got their security plans, so we could augment them in case of a breach of security," he said. "We're there to help the Pakistanis, but we're also there to extend our own axis of security to their nuclear stockpile." The detailed American planning even includes an estimate of how many nuclear triggers could be placed inside a C-17 cargo plane, the former official said, and where the triggers could be sequestered. Admiral Mullen, asked about increased American insight into the arsenal, said, through his spokesman, "I am not aware of our receipt of any such information." (A senior military officer added that the information, if it had been conveyed, would most likely "have gone to another government agency.")

A spokesman for the Pakistani military said, in an official denial, "Pakistan neither needs any American unit for enhancing the security for its arsenal nor would accept it." The spokesman added that the Pakistani military "has been providing protection to U.S. troops in a situation of crisis"—a reference to Pakistan's role in the war on terror—"and hence is quite capable to deal with any untoward situation."

Early this summer, a consultant to the Department of Defense said, a highly classified military and civil-emergency response team was put on alert after receiving an urgent report from American intelligence officials indicating that a Pakistani nuclear component had gone astray. The team, which operates clandestinely and includes terrorism and nonproliferation experts from the intelligence community, the Pentagon, the F.B.I., and the D.O.E., is under standing orders to deploy from Andrews Air Force Base, in Maryland, within four hours of an alert. When the report turned out to be a false alarm, the mission was aborted, the consultant said.

LITTLE RED RIDING CARPET
THE WOLF WAS AMAZING—SO MUCH FUN TO WORK WITH.
BEK

By the time the team got the message, it was already in Dubai.

In an actual crisis, would the Pakistanis give an American team direct access to their arsenal? An adviser to the Pentagon on counterinsurgency said that some analysts suspected that the Pakistani military had taken steps to move elements of the nuclear arsenal "out of the count"—to shift them to a storage facility known only to a very few—as a hedge against mutiny or an American or Indian effort to seize them. "If you thought your American ally was telling your enemy where the weapons were, you'd do the same thing," the adviser said.

"Let me say this about our nuclear deterrent," President Zardari told me, when asked about any recent understandings between Pakistan and the United States. "We give comfort to each other, and the comfort level is good, because everybody respects everybody's integrity. We're all big boys."

Zardari and I met twice, first in his office, in the grand but isolated Presidential compound in Islamabad, and then, a few days later, alone over dinner in his personal quarters. Zardari, who became President after the assassination, in December, 2007, of his charismatic wife, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, spent nearly eleven years in jail on corruption charges. He is widely known in Pakistan as Mr. Ten Per Cent, a reference to the commissions he allegedly took on government contracts when Bhutto was in power, and is seen by many Pakistanis as little more than a crook who has grown too close to America; his approval ratings are in the teens. He is chatty but guarded, proud but defensive, and, like many Pakistanis, convinced that the United States will always favor India. Over dinner, he spoke of his suspicions regarding his wife's death. He said that, despite rumors to the contrary, he would complete his five-year term.

Zardari spoke with derision about what he depicted as America's obsession with the vulnerability of his nation's nuclear arsenal. "In your country, you feel that you have to hold the fort for us," he said. "The American people want a lot of answers for the errors of the past, and it's very easy to spread fear. Our Army officers are not crazy, like the Taliban. They're British-trained. Why would they slip up on nuclear security? A mutiny would never happen in Pakistan. It's a fear being spread by the few who seek to scare the many."

Zardari offered some advice to Barack Obama: instead of fretting about nuclear security in Pakistan, his Administration should deal with the military disparity between Pakistan and India, which has a much larger army. "You should help us get conventional weapons," he said. "It's a balance-of-power issue."

In May, Zardari, at the urging of the United States, approved a major offensive against the Taliban, sending thirty thousand troops into the Swat Valley, which lies a hundred miles northwest of Islamabad. "The enemy that we were fighting in Swat was made up of twenty per cent thieves and thugs and eighty per cent with the same mind-set as the Taliban," Zardari said. He depicted the operation as a complete success, but added that his government was not "ready" to kill all the Taliban. His long-term solution, Zardari said, was to provide new business opportunities in Swat and turn the Taliban into entrepreneurs. "Money is the best incentive," he said. "They can be rented."

Zardari's view of the Swat offensive was striking, given that many Pakistanis had been angered by the excessive use of force and the ensuing refugee crisis. The lives of about two million people were torn apart, and, during a summer in which temperatures soared to a hundred and twenty degrees, hundreds of thousands of civilians were crowded into government-run tent cities. Idris Khattak, a former student radical who now works with Amnesty International, said in Peshawar that residents had described nights of heavy, indiscriminate bombing and shelling, followed in the morning by Army sweeps. The villagers, and not the Taliban, had been hit the hardest. "People told us that the bombing the night before was a signal for the Taliban to get out," he said.

Zardari did not dispute that there were difficulties in the refugee camps—the heat, the lack of facilities. But he insisted that the fault lay with the civilians, who, he said, had been far too tolerant of the Taliban. The suffering could serve a useful purpose: after a summer in the tents, the citizens of Swat might have learned a lesson and would not "let the Taliban back into their cities."

Rahimullah Yusufzai, an eminent Pakistani journalist, who has twice interviewed Osama bin Laden, had a different explanation for the conditions that led to the offensive. "The Taliban were initially trying to win public support in Swat by delivering justice and peace," Yusufzai said. "But when they got into power they went crazy and became brutal. Many are from the lowest ranks of society, and they began killing and terrorizing their opponents. The people were afraid."

The turmoil did not end with the Army's invasion. "Most of the people who were in the refugee camps told us that the Army was equally bad. There was so much killing," Yusufzai said. The government had placed limits on reporters who tried to enter the Swat Valley during the attack, but afterward Yusufzai and his colleagues were able to interview officers. "They told us they hated what they were doing—'We were trained to fight Indians.'" But that changed when they sustained heavy losses, especially of junior officers. "They were killing everybody after their colleagues were killed—just like the Americans with their Predator missiles," Yusufzai said. "What the Army did not understand, and what the Americans don't understand, is that by demolishing the house of a suspected Taliban or their supporters you are making an enemy of the whole family." What looked like a tactical victory could turn out to be a strategic failure.

The Obama Administration has had difficulty coming to terms with how unhappy many Pakistanis are with the United States. Secretary of State Clinton, during her three-day "good-will visit" to Pakistan, late last month, seemed taken aback by the angry and, at times, provocative criticism of American policies that dominated many of her public appearances, and responded defensively.

Last year, the Washington *Times* ran an article about the Pressler Amendment, a 1985 law cutting off most military aid to Pakistan as long as it continued its nuclear program. The measure didn't stop Pakistan from getting the bomb, or from buying certain weapons, but it did reduce the number of Pakistani officers who were permitted to train with American units. The article quoted Major General John Custer as saying, "The older military leaders love us. They understand American culture and they know we are not the enemy." The General's assessment provoked a barrage of e-mail among American officers with experience in Pakistan, and a former member of a Special Forces unit provided me with copies. "The fact that a two-star would make a statement [like] that . . . is at best naïve and actually pure bullshit," a senior Special Forces officer on duty in Pakistan wrote. He went on:

> I have met and interacted with the entire military staff from General Kayani on down and all the general officers on their joint staff and in all the services, and I haven't spoken to one that "loves us"—whatever that means. In fact, I have read most of the TS [top secret] assessments of all their General Officers and I haven't read one that comes close to their "loving" us. They play us for everything they can get, and we trip over ourselves trying to give them everything they ask for, and cannot pay for.

Some military men who know Pakistan well believe that, whatever the officer corps's personal views, the Pakistan Army remains reliable. "They cannot be described as pro-American, but this doesn't mean they don't know which side their bread is buttered on," Brian Cloughley, who served six years as Australia's defense attaché to Pakistan and is now a contributor to *Jane's Sentinel*, told me. "The chance of mutiny is slim. Were this to happen, there would be the most severe reaction" by special security units in the Pakistani military, Cloughley said. "But worry feeds irrationality, and the international consequences could be dire."

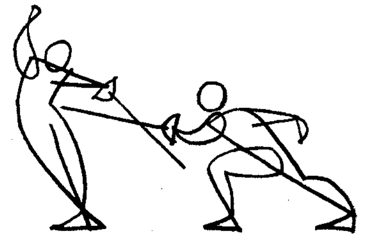
The recollections of Bush Administration officials who dealt with Pakistan in the first round of nuclear consultations after September 11th do not inspire confidence. The Americans' main contact was Lieutenant General Khalid Kidwai, the head of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division, the agency that is responsible for nuclear strategy and operations and for the physical security of the weapons complex. At first, a former high-level Bush Administration official told me, Kidwai was reassuring; his professionalism increased their faith in the soundness of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine and its fail-safe procedures. The Army was controlled by Punjabis who, the Americans thought, "did not put up with Pashtuns," as the former Bush Administration official put it. (The Taliban are mostly Pashtun.) But by the time the official left, at the beginning of George W. Bush's second term, he had a much darker assessment: "They don't trust us and they will not tell you the truth."

No American, for example, was permitted access to A. Q. Khan, the metallurgist and so-called father of the Pakistani atomic bomb, who traded crucial nuclear-weapons components on the international black market. Musharraf placed him under house arrest in early 2004, claiming to have been shocked to learn of Khan's dealings. At the time, it was widely understood that those activities had been sanctioned by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (I.S.I.). Khan was freed in February, although there are restrictions on his travel. (In an interview last year, Kidwai told David Sanger, for his book "The Inheritance," that "our security systems are foolproof," thanks to technical controls; Sanger noted that Bush Administration officials were "not as confident in private as they sound in public.")

A former State Department official who worked on nuclear issues with Pakistan after September 11th said that he'd come to understand that the Pakistanis "believe that any information we get from them would be shared with others—perhaps even the Indians. To know the command-and-control processes of their nuclear weapons is one thing. To know where the weapons actually are is another thing."

The former State Department official cited the large Pakistan Air Force base outside Sargodha, west of Lahore, where many of Pakistan's nuclear-capable F-16s are thought to be stationed. "Is there a nuke ready to go at Sargodha?" the former official asked. "If there is, and Sargodha is the size of Andrews Air Force Base, would we know where to go? Are the warheads stored in Bunker X?" Ignorance could be dangerous. "If our people don't know where to go and we suddenly show up at a base, there will be a lot of people shooting at them," he said. "And even if the Pakistanis may have told us that the triggers will be at Bunker X, is it true?"

In the July/August issue of *Arms Control Today*, Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, who recently retired after three years as the Department of Energy's director of intelligence and counter-intelligence, preceded by two decades at the C.I.A., wrote vividly about the "lethal proximity between terrorists, extremists, and nuclear weapons insiders" in Pakistan. "Insiders have facilitated terrorist attacks. Suicide bombings have occurred at air force bases that reportedly serve as nuclear weapons storage sites. It is difficult to ignore such trends," Mowatt-Larssen wrote. "Purely in actuarial terms, there is a strong possibility that bad apples in the nuclear establishment are willing to cooperate with outsiders for personal gain or out of sympathy for their cause. Nowhere in the world is this threat greater than in Pakistan. . . . Anything that helps upgrade Pakistan's nuclear security is an investment" in America's security.



Leslie H. Gelb, a president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, said, "I don't think there's any kind of an agreement we can count on. The Pakistanis have learned how to deal with us, and they understand that if they don't tell us what we want to hear we'll cut off their goodies." Gelb added, "In all these years, the C.I.A. never built up assets, but it talks as if there were 'access.' I don't know if Obama understands that the Agency doesn't know what it's talking about."

The former high-level Bush Administration official was just as blunt. "If a Pakistani general is talking to you about nuclear issues, and his lips are moving, he's lying," he said. "The Pakistanis wouldn't share their secrets with anybody, and certainly not with a country that, from their point of view, used them like a Dixie cup and then threw them away."

Sultan Amir Tarar, known to many as Colonel Imam, is the archetype of the disillusioned Pakistani officer. Tarar spent eighteen years with the I.S.I. in Afghanistan, most of them as an undercover operative. In the mujahideen war against the Soviet Union, in the eighties, he worked closely with C.I.A. agents, and liked the experience. "They were honest and thoughtful and provided the finest equipment," Tarar said during an interview in Rawalpindi. He spoke with pride of shaking hands with Robert Gates in Afghanistan in 1985. Gates, now the Secretary of Defense, was then a senior C.I.A. official. "I've heard all about you," Gates said, according to Tarar. "Good or bad?" "Oh, my. All good," Gates replied. Tarar's view changed after the Russians withdrew and, in his opinion, "the Americans abandoned us." When I asked if he'd seen "Charlie Wilson's War," the movie depicting that abandonment and a Texas congressman's futile efforts to change the policy, Tarar laughed and said, "I've seen Charlie Wilson. I didn't need to see the movie."

Tarar, who retired in 1995 and has a son in the Army, believed—as did many Pakistani military men—that the American campaign to draw Pakistan deeper into the war against the Taliban would backfire. "The Americans are trying to rent out their war to us," he said. If the Obama Administration persists, "there will be an uprising here, and this corrupt government will collapse. Every Pakistani will then be his own nuclear bomb—a suicide bomber," Tarar said. "The longer the war goes on, the longer it will spill over in the tribal territories, and it will lead to a revolutionary stage. People there will flee to the big cities like Lahore and Islamabad."

Tarar believed that the Obama Administration had to negotiate with the Afghan Taliban, even if that meant direct talks with Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader. Tarar knew Mullah Omar well. "Omar trained as a young man in my camp in 1985," he told me. "He was physically fit and mission-oriented—a very honest man who was a practicing Muslim. Nothing beyond that. He was a Talib—a student, and not a mullah. But people respected him. Today, among all the Afghan leaders, Omar has the biggest audience, and this is the right time for you to talk to him."

Speaking to Tarar and other officers gave a glimpse of the acrimony at the top of the Pakistani government, which has complicated the nuclear equation. Tarar spoke bitterly about the position that General Kayani found himself in, carrying out the "corrupt" policies of the Americans and of Zardari, while Pakistan's soldiers "were fighting gallantly in Swat against their own people."

A $7.5-billion American aid package, approved by Congress in September, was, to the surprise of many in Washington, controversial in Pakistan, because it contained provisions seen as strengthening Zardari at the expense of the military. Shaheen Sehbai, a senior editor of the newspaper *International*, said that Zardari's "problem is that he's besieged domestically on all sides, and he thinks only the Americans can save him," and, as a result, "he'll open his pants for them." Sehbai noted that Kayani's term as Army chief ends in the fall of 2010. If Zardari tried to replace him before then, Kayani's colleagues would not accept his choice, and there could be "a generals' coup," Sehbai said. "America should worry more about the structure and organization of the Army—and keep it intact."

"I'm waiting for it to defrost."

• •

Lieutenant General Hamid Gul was the director general of the I.S.I. in the late eighties and worked with the C.I.A. in Afghanistan. Gul, who is retired, is a devout Muslim and had been accused by the Bush Administration of having ties to the Taliban and Al Qaeda—allegations he has denied. "What would happen if, in a crisis, you tried to get—or did not get—our nuclear triggers? What happens then?" Gul asked when we met. "You will have us as an enemy, with the Chinese and Russians behind us."

If Pakistani officers had given any assurances about the nuclear arsenal, Gul said, "they are cheating you and they would be right to do so. We should not be aiding and abetting Americans."

Persuading the Pakistan Army to concentrate on fighting the Taliban, and not India, is crucial to the Obama Administration's plans for the region. There has been enmity between India and Pakistan since 1947, when Britain's withdrawal led to the partition of the subcontinent. The state of Kashmir, which was three-quarters Muslim but acceded to Hindu-majority India, has been in dispute ever since, and India and Pakistan have twice gone to war over the territory. Through the years, the Pakistan Army and the I.S.I. have relied on Pakistan-based jihadist groups, most notably Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, to carry out a guerrilla war against the Indians in Kashmir. Many in the Pakistani military consider the groups to be an important strategic reserve.

A retired senior Pakistani intelligence officer, who worked with his C.I.A. counterparts to track down Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, said that he was deeply troubled by the prospect of Pakistan ceding any control over its nuclear deterrent. "Suppose the jihadis strike at India again—another attack on the parliament. India will tell the United States to stay out of it, and 'We'll sort it out on our own,' " he said. "Then there would be a ground attack into Pakistan. As we begin to react, the Americans will be interested in protecting our nuclear assets, and urge us not to go nuclear—'Let the Indians attack and do not respond!' They would urge us instead to find those responsible for the attack on

India. Our nuclear arsenal was supposed to be our savior, but *we* would end up protecting *it*. It doesn't protect us," he said.

"My belief today is that it's better to have the Americans as an enemy rather than as a friend, because you cannot be trusted," the former officer concluded. "The only good thing the United States did for us was to look the other way about an atomic bomb when it suited the United States to do so."

Pakistan's fears about the United States coöperating with India are not irrational. Last year, Congress approved a controversial agreement that enabled India to purchase nuclear fuel and technology from the United States without joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty, making India the only non-signatory to the N.P.T. permitted to do so. Concern about the Pakistani arsenal has since led to greater coöperation between the United States and India in missile defense; the training of the Indian Air Force to use bunker-busting bombs; and "the collection of intelligence on the Pakistani nuclear arsenal," according to the consultant to the intelligence community. (The Pentagon declined to comment.)

I flew to New Delhi after my stay in Pakistan and met with two senior officials from the Research and Analysis Wing, India's national intelligence agency. (Of course, as in Pakistan, no allegation about the other side should be taken at face value.) "Our worries are about the nuclear weapons in Pakistan," one of the officials said. "Not because we are worried about the mullahs taking over the country; we're worried about those senior officers in the Pakistan Army who are Caliphates"—believers in a fundamentalist pan-Islamic state. "We know some of them and we have names," he said. "We've been watching colonels who are now brigadiers. These are the guys who could blackmail the whole world"—that is, by seizing a nuclear weapon.

The Indian intelligence official went on, "Do we know if the Americans have that intelligence? This is not in the scheme of the way you Americans look at things—'Kayani is a great guy! Let's have a drink and smoke a cigar with him and his buddies.' Some of the men we are watching have notions of leading an Islamic army."

In an interview the next afternoon, an Indian official who has dealt diplomatically with Pakistan for years said, "Pakistan is in trouble, and it's worrisome to us because an unstable Pakistan is the worst thing we can have." But he wasn't sure what America could do. "They like *us* better in Pakistan than you Americans," he said. "I can tell you that in a public-opinion poll we, India, will beat you."

India and Pakistan, he added, have had back-channel talks for years in an effort to resolve the dispute over Kashmir, but "Pakistan wants talks for the sake of talks, and it does not carry out the agreements already reached." (In late October, Manmohan Singh, the Indian Prime Minister, publicly renewed an offer of talks, but tied it to a request that Pakistan crack down on terrorism; Pakistan's official response was to welcome the overture.)

The Indian official, like his counterparts in Pakistan, believed that Americans did not appreciate what his government had done for them. "Why did the Pakistanis remove two divisions from the border with us?" He was referring to the shifting of Pakistani forces, at the request of the United States, to better engage the Taliban. "It means they have confidence that we will not take advantage of the situation. We deserve a pat on the back for this." Instead, the official said, with a shrug, "you are too concerned with your relationship with Pakistan."

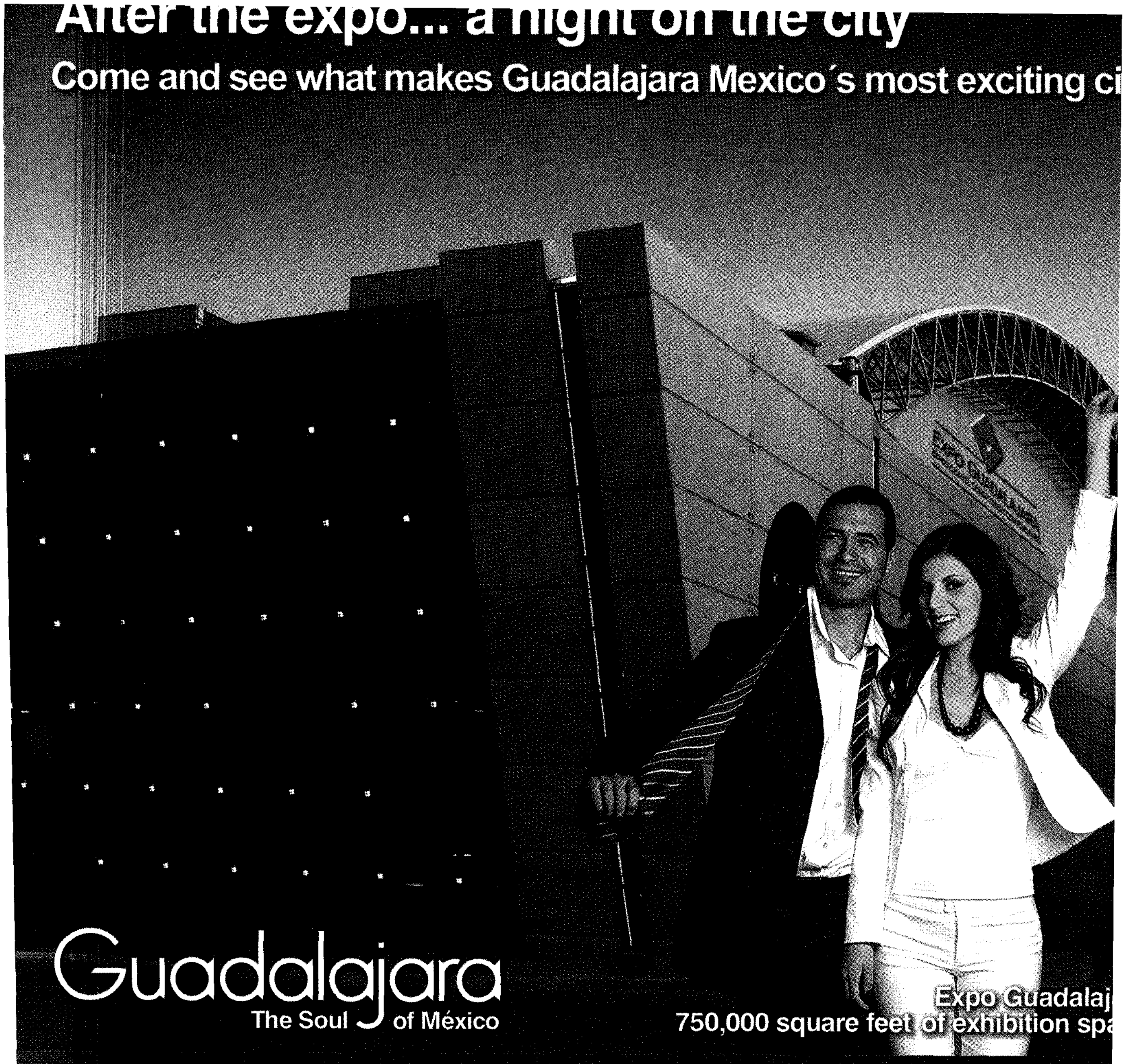
"When did we switch from magazines to musical instruments?"

Pervez Musharraf lives in unpretentious exile with his wife in an apartment in London, near Hyde Park. Officials who had dealt with him cautioned that, along with his many faults, he had a disarmingly open manner. At the beginning of our talk, I asked him why, on a visit to Washington in late January, he had not met with any senior Obama Administration officials. "I did not ask for a meeting because I was afraid of being told no," he said. At another point, Musharraf, dressed casually in slacks and a sports shirt, said that he had been troubled by the American-controlled Predator drone attacks on targets inside Pakistan, which began in 2005. "I said to the Americans, 'Give us the Predators.' It was refused. I told the Americans, 'Then just say publicly that you're giving them to us. You keep on firing them but put Pakistan Air Force markings on them.' That, too, was denied."

Musharraf, who was forced out of office in August, 2008, under threat of impeachment, did not spare his successor. "Asif Zardari is a criminal and a fraud," Musharraf told me. "He'll do anything to save himself. He's not a patriot and he's got no love for Pakistan. He's a third-rater."

Musharraf said that he and General Kayani, who had been his nominee for Chief of Army Staff, were still in telephone contact. Musharraf came to power in a military coup in 1999, and remained in uniform until near the end of his Presidency. He said that he didn't think the Army was capable of mutiny—not the Army he knew. "There are people with fundamentalist ideas in the Army, but I don't think there is any possibility of these people getting organized and doing an up-

After the expo... a night on the city
Come and see what makes Guadalajara Mexico´s most exciting ci


Guadalajara
The Soul of México
Expo Guadalaj
750,000 square feet of exhibition sp

EXPO GUADALAJARA

Did you know that Latin America's largest meeting room is the new Salon Guadalajara at Expo Guadalajara?

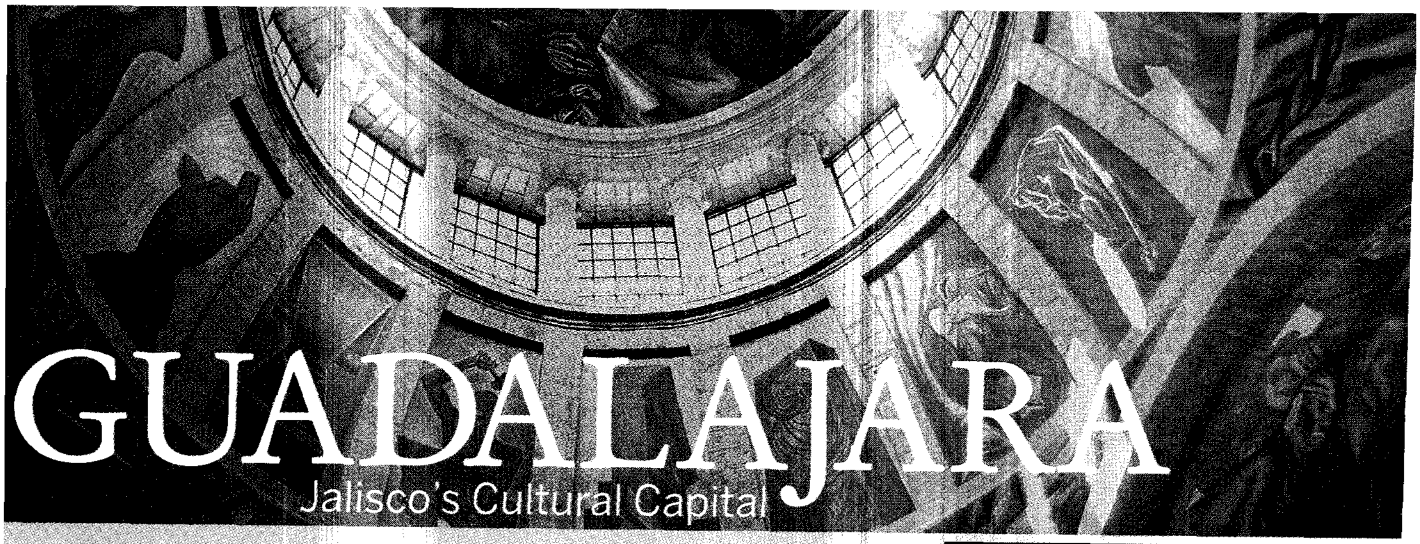
Expo Guadalajara is an ideal venue for exhibitions, congresses, conventions and business meetings, with 750,000 square feet of facilities, as well as 20 meeting rooms in its business center and spaces for outdoor events

www.guadalajaramidestino.com

Jalisco
ES MÉXICO

Guadalajara
The Soul of México

MÉXICO



GUADALAJARA

Jalisco's Cultural Capital

GUADALAJARA'S YEARLONG SPRINGTIME offers an invitation to relax outdoors in the city's historic center, gaze at baroque façades and fountains, people-watch, and perhaps sample a glass of the region's famed tequila while listening to random strains of mariachi. But when it's time to head inside, some of Mexico's most emotionally charged twentieth-century art can be seen in the murals of José Clemente Orozco within two landmarks adjacent to the cathedral.

Orozco was a native of Jalisco, the state that Guadalajara is the capital of. He returned from the United States in the nineteen-thirties and brought his searing images to colonial buildings. Upon entering the **Palacio de Gobierno**, which dates to the mid-seventeenth century, visitors are met by a haunting depiction of Miguel Hidalgo, the Creole priest and father of Mexico's independence, who abolished slavery here two hundred years ago. The graceful **Instituto Cultural Cabañas**, which was designed by Manuel Tolsá and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, caps any journey with fifty-three Orozco murals, including "The Man in Flames."

Other nearby locations serve up their own palettes of color. The **Museo Regional de Guadalajara** is housed in a seventeenth-century seminary with cloister gardens, an apt setting for its local artifacts and fine art. The late-nineteenth-century **Teatro Degollado**, home to the superb Ballet Folklórico troupe, is a five-tiered concert hall crowned by a mural depicting the Fourth Canto of Dante's *Inferno*. The **Mercado Libertad**, one of Latin America's largest indoor markets, features local food as well as crafts in its thousand-plus stalls.

Ceramics from the region were prized long before the Spanish conquest and are represented in the art galleries of **Tlaquepaque**. They can also be found in the weekly markets of **Tonalá** and nearby ceramics museums. Treasured equally is the historic craft of tequila-making, which is concentrated in the spiny blue agave fields and the distilleries northwest of the city, a designated World Heritage Site. Take the **Tequila Express** train for an entertaining ride of sipping and music to the distinguished **Herradura** distillery. Or head to the town of Tequila itself, with dozens more factories open for tastings, including **Sauza's** facility and museum, to discover tequila's engaging backstory.

Mexico's largest lake, **Lago de Chapala**, lies just south of the city, near the forest-rimmed village of **Mazamitla** nestled in the Sierra del Tigre foothills. The lure of the surf might draw travelers west to the Pacific coast, about a half-day's drive away. Here Guadalajara's springtime turns into the summery bliss of the **Bahía de Banderas** and **Puerto Vallarta**.

Plan your trip at Guadalajara.gob.mx or go to visitmexico.com.

uadalajara, the hospitable heart of Jalisco, has it all. Meticulously preserved architecture, Orozco, nd some of the best crafts and decorative arts in Mexico. It's a shopper's paradise, the home of nfectious mariachi, fine-quality tequila, and everlasting charm.

IMAGES, FROM TOP: OROZCO MURAL AND LOS ARCOS PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEXICO TOURISM; MARIACHI FESTIVITIES ©ROBERT KELLY; EL TEATRO DEGOLLADO ©JESÚS ADOLFO RENDON MALDONADO

rising. These 'fundos' were disliked and not popular."

He added, "Muslims think highly of Obama, and he should use his acceptability—even with the Taliban—and try to deal with them politically."

Musharraf spoke of two prior attempts to create a fundamentalist uprising in the Army. In both cases, he said, the officers involved were arrested and prosecuted. "I created the strategic force that controls all the strategic assets—eighteen to twenty thousand strong. They are monitored for character and for potential fundamentalism," he said. He acknowledged, however, that things had changed since he'd left office. "People have become alarmed because of the Taliban and what they have done," he said. "Everyone is now alarmed."

The rise in militancy is a sensitive subject, and many inside Pakistan insist that American fears, and the implied threat to the nuclear arsenal, are overwrought. Amélie Blom, a political sociologist at Lahore University of Management Sciences, noted that the Army continues to support an unpopular President. "The survival of the coalition government shows that the present Army leadership has an interest in making it work," she said in an e-mail.

Others are less sure. "Nuclear weapons are only as safe as the people who handle them," Pervez Hoodbhoy, an eminent nuclear physicist in Pakistan, said in a talk last summer at a *Nation* and Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy forum in New York. For more than two decades, Hoodbhoy said, "the Pakistan Army has been recruiting on the basis of faithfulness to Islam. As a consequence, there is now a different character present among Army officers and ordinary soldiers. There are half a dozen scenarios that one can imagine." There was no proof either that the most dire scenarios would be realized or that the arsenal was safe, he said.

The current offensive in South Waziristan marked a significant success for the Obama Administration, which had urged Zardari to take greater control of the tribal areas. There was a risk, too—that the fighting would further radicalize Pakistan. Last week, another Pakistan Army general was the victim of a drive-by assassination attempt, as he was leaving his home in Islamabad. Since the Waziristan operation was announced, more than three hundred people have been killed in a dozen terrorist attacks. "If we push too hard there, we could trigger a social revolution," the Special Forces adviser said. "We are playing into Al Qaeda's deep game here. If we blow it, Al Qaeda could come in and scoop up a nuke or two." He added, "The Pakistani military knows that if there's any kind of instability there will be a traffic jam to seize their nukes." More escalation in Pakistan, he said, "will take us to the brink."

During my stay in Pakistan—my first in five years—there were undeniable signs that militancy and the influence of fundamentalist Islam had grown. In the past, military officers, politicians, and journalists routinely served Johnnie Walker Black during our talks, and drank it themselves. This time, even the most senior retired Army generals offered only juice or tea, even in their own homes. Officials and journalists said that soldiers and middle-level officers were increasingly attracted to the preaching of Zaid Hamid, who joined the mujahideen and fought for nine years in Afghanistan. On CDs and on television, Hamid exhorts soldiers to think of themselves as Muslims first and Pakistanis second. He claims that terrorist attacks in Mumbai last year were staged by India and Western Zionists, aided by the Mossad. Another proselytizer, Dr. Israr Ahmed, writes a column in the Urdu press in which he depicts the Holocaust as "divine punishment," and advocates the extermination of the Jews. He, too, is said to be popular with the officer corps.

A senior Obama Administration official brought up Hizb ut-Tahrir, a Sunni organization whose goal is to establish the Caliphate. "They've penetrated the Pakistani military and now have cells in the Army," he said. (The Pakistan Army denies this.) In one case, according to the official, Hizb ut-Tahrir had recruited members of a junior officer group, from the most élite Pakistani military academy, who had been sent to England for additional training.

"Where do these guys get socialized and exposed to Islamic evangelism and the fundamentalism narrative?" the Obama Administration official asked. "In services every Friday for Army officers, and at corps and unit meetings where they are addressed by senior commanders and clerics." ♦

Save an Additional
20% off Down Robes
Bed Jacket & Slippers
LIMITED TIME OFFER!
Cotton fabric, Shawl collar and roll back cuffs. Cream, peach, bluette, white, navy, burgundy or teal. Sizes XS, S, M, L, XL.
Robe-Reg. $180, **Sale $99.95 + 20% off = $79.96**. S&H $8.95.
Bed Jacket-Reg. $120, **Sale $59.95 + 20% off = $47.96**. S&H $8.95.
Matching Down Slippers in sizes XS, S, M, L. Reg $42, **Sale $24.95 + 20% off = $19.96**. S&H $4.95. CA residents add 9.5% tax.
FREE SHIPPING & HANDLING
when you purchase both Down Robe or Bed Jacket & Slippers.
Order by Phone, Website or Mail.
MC, Visa or Check.
WARM THINGS
180 Paul Dr., Dept. NY
San Rafael, CA 94903
415-472-2154
Ships within 48 hrs.
www.warmthingsonline.com

WEBSITES
$695
CUSTOM DESIGNS • USA COMPANY
HUNDREDS OF SATISFIED CLIENTS
GREAT FOR CORPORATE, PROFESSIONALS, RETAIL
COPYRIGHT: YOU OWN EVERYTHING
FAST TURNAROUND
AS SEEN IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,
NEW YORK TIMES, FORTUNE MAGAZINE, BEST BETS
866.222.0048
WWW.CONNECTIVEMKTG.COM

A COLLEGE HOLIDAY
America's Leader in Collegiate Gifts since 1965
Desk Boxes from $110
Personalization Available
2000 College Scenes
Immediate Delivery
800 • 443 • 8987
www.eglomisedesigns.com
EGLOMISÉ DESIGNS, INC.®

JOHN ⚓ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
RAISED
MONOGRAM
SEVEN DIFFERENT STYLES
$590
3-DAY RUSH AVAILABLE!
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE AND FREE RESIZE
RINGBOX.COM 1.888.646.6466

GARY WEEKS & COMPANY
FURNITUREMAKERS
Comfort and satisfaction guaranteed or your money back, including shipping.
888-334-0307
www.garyweeks.com

The Center for Eating Disorders
AT SHEPPARD PRATT
Addressing the medical and psychiatric needs of patients with eating disorders
our roots are in healing
Baltimore, MD • 410-938-5252 • www.eatingdisorder.org

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

ally

Straightforward.

ALLY MAKES MONEY WITH YOU, NOT OFF YOU.

Introducing Ally, a bank that believes banking took a wrong turn somewhere with fees and penalties. It's your money; shouldn't you have a bank that treats it that way? Rates that are among the most competitive in the country, never hiding behind fine print, and 24/7 access to a real human.

Why? It's just the right thing to do.

877.247.ALLY
allybank.com

LIFE AND LETTERS

SLOW FADE

F. Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood.

BY ARTHUR KRYSTAL

"Dear Scott: I don't know where you are living and I'll be damned if I believe anyone lives in a place called 'The Garden of Allah,'" Thomas Wolfe wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald, in July of 1937. Wolfe sent his letter "c/o Charles Scribner's Sons," knowing that their editor, Maxwell Perkins, would forward it to Fitzgerald wherever he might be. Fitzgerald was, in fact, living at the Garden of Allah, a bungalow colony on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, along with Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, S. J. Perelman, Ogden Nash, and other writers in the screen trade. He had arrived earlier that month to take a job at the M-G-M studio in Culver City. He occupied a small office on the third floor of the writers' building, where from ten in the morning until six at night he worked on scripts and drank bottles of Coca-Cola, carefully arranging the empties around the room. Fitzgerald lasted eighteen months at M-G-M, during which time he worked on five scripts, wrote another one more or less from scratch, and generated a pile of notes and memos. And if his work was altered or rejected, he'd follow up with bitter, self-justifying letters.

There was a spate of such letters. Fitzgerald, to put it mildly, did not impress the studio bosses. The rap against him was that he couldn't make the shift from words on the page to images on the screen. His plotting was elaborate without purpose; his dialogue arch or sentimental; and his tone too serious—at times, even grim. Billy Wilder, who seemed genuinely fond of Fitzgerald, likened him to "a great sculptor who is hired to do a plumbing job"—with no idea how to connect the pipes and make the water flow.

On the face of it, he should have taken Hollywood by storm: he wrote commercially successful stories; he knew how to frame a scene; and his dialogue, at least in his best fiction, was smart, sophisticated, evocative. And of all the American novelists writing in the nineteen-twenties and thirties—Dreiser, Lewis, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Steinbeck—Fitzgerald had the strongest attachment to Hollywood. As a boy, he was a passionate moviegoer; he directed and acted in plays, and his desk was filled, he later recalled, with "dozens of notebooks containing the germs of dozens of musical comedies." Moreover, three of his early stories had been made into silent films, as had his novels "The Beautiful and Damned" and "The Great Gatsby." Fitzgerald began trying to write for the movies as early as 1922, and yet, for all his efforts, he earned exactly one screen credit: a shared billing on "Three Comrades." So what was the problem?

Five years ago, Fitzgerald's Hollywood career came in for a new round of scrutiny, when the University of South Carolina paid four hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars for the bulk of his M-G-M output. The material had gathered dust in the M-G-M archives until an employee named Martin Kraegel salvaged it, in the early seventies, when the company began to consolidate its assets. Kraegel then sat on the documents (around two thousand pages, some in pencilled longhand) for another three decades before attempting to sell them. But there was a complication. Strictly speaking, he didn't own the papers; at any rate, he didn't own the intellectual rights to them. Nor, as it turned out, did the Fitzgerald estate. Lawyers determined that, since the manuscripts had been generated as "work for hire," such rights belonged to Time Warner, which had bought Turner Broadcasting System in 1996, which, in turn, had owned M-G-M's film library since 1986.

Enter Matthew J. Bruccoli, industrious collector of all things Fitzgeraldian, who, for nearly forty years, until his death, in 2008, taught at the University of South Carolina. Bruccoli authenticated the papers and, in April, 2004, helped broker a deal bringing them to the university, where—christened the "Warner Bros./Turner Entertainment F. Scott Fitzgerald Screenplay Collection"—they reside in the Thomas Cooper Library.

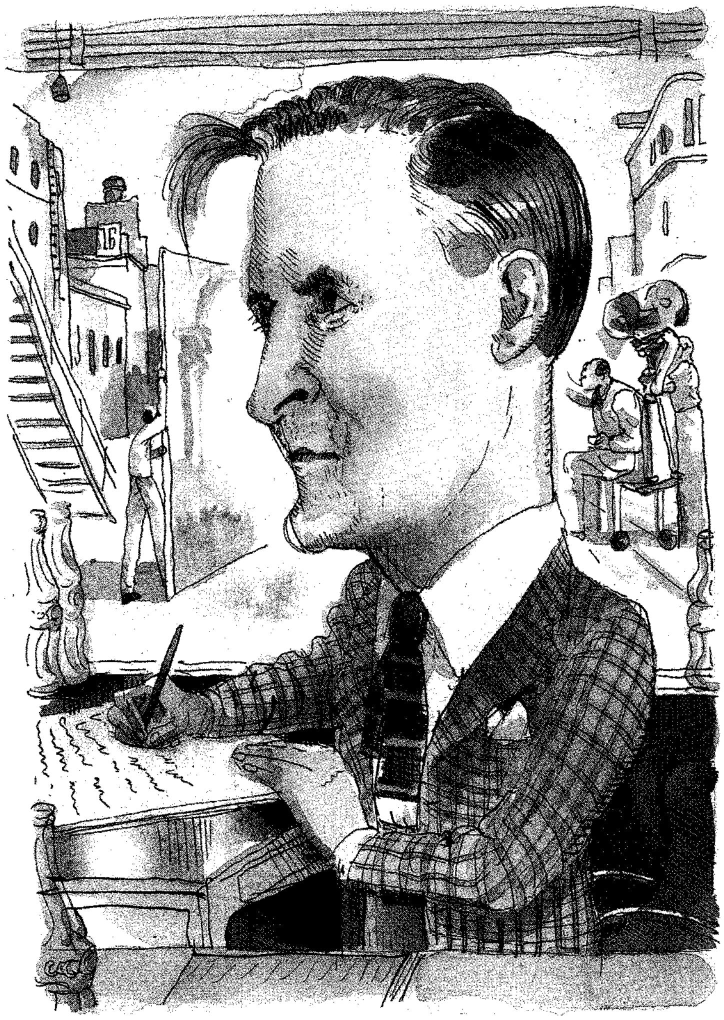
Although a number of writers have addressed Fitzgerald's time in Hollywood, his biographers have generally given short shrift to the screenplays—the assumption being that he wrote them for the money. You bet he did—as did Raymond Chandler, William Faulkner, Anthony Powell, P. G. Wodehouse, Aldous Huxley, and half a dozen other literary luminaries—but for Fitzgerald it wasn't just about the money. According to Charles Marquis Warren, Fitzgerald's collaborator on a screen treatment of "Tender Is the Night," "Scott would rather have written a movie than the Bible, than a best-seller." This overstates the case, but Fitzgerald was certainly the first American novelist to take the movies seriously and the first to regard his own talent as a natural fit with Hollywood. One might also add that his life exemplified that all-too-neat reversal of fortune of which Hollywood studios were so fond.

No American writer before Fitzgerald had achieved success so young or fallen from favor quite so quickly. Born on September 24, 1896, in St. Paul, Minnesota, he entered Princeton University in 1913, but did not graduate; he joined the Army in 1917, but never made it overseas; and then, like Byron, nearly a century earlier, he awakened one morning to find himself famous. His first novel, "This Side of Paradise" (1920), featuring sensitive Ivy League students, struck a chord, when chords still vibrated to bobbed hair and petting. In the nineteen-twenties, he and his wife, the mercurial Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, romped through the capitals of Europe, seemingly with a highball in either hand. The twenties were Fitzgerald's decade, a moment when the nation, as he put it, "was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history." He dubbed that spree the Jazz Age, and he and Zelda were forever associated with its lavish parties, bathtub gin, and cloche-hatted flappers.

Part of our fascination with Fitzgerald involves his fall from grace. The Depression repudiated not only the Jazz Age but also the writer most associated with it. The man who commanded between three thousand and four thousand dollars for a short story as late as 1930 was forgotten by the reading public six years later; in 1936, his total book royalties amounted to just over eighty dollars. Money problems were the least of it. In the early thirties, his fourth attempt at a novel (about a cameraman who dreams of being a director), which eventually became "Tender Is the Night" (about a psychiatrist who behaves like a director), was giving him fits. He was drinking too much and popping pills both to sleep and to wake up. His marriage was deteriorating—Zelda suffered a mental breakdown in 1930, and was in and out of sanitariums for the rest of her life—and in November, 1935, he bolted to Hendersonville, North Carolina, where he took a room in a hotel and began writing three confessional articles for *Esquire* (posthumously included in "The Crack-Up"), which horrified his friends and further damaged his reputation. Finally, there was the disastrous interview he gave to the New York *Post*, on his fortieth birthday, which made him sound like a drunken, unstable has-been.

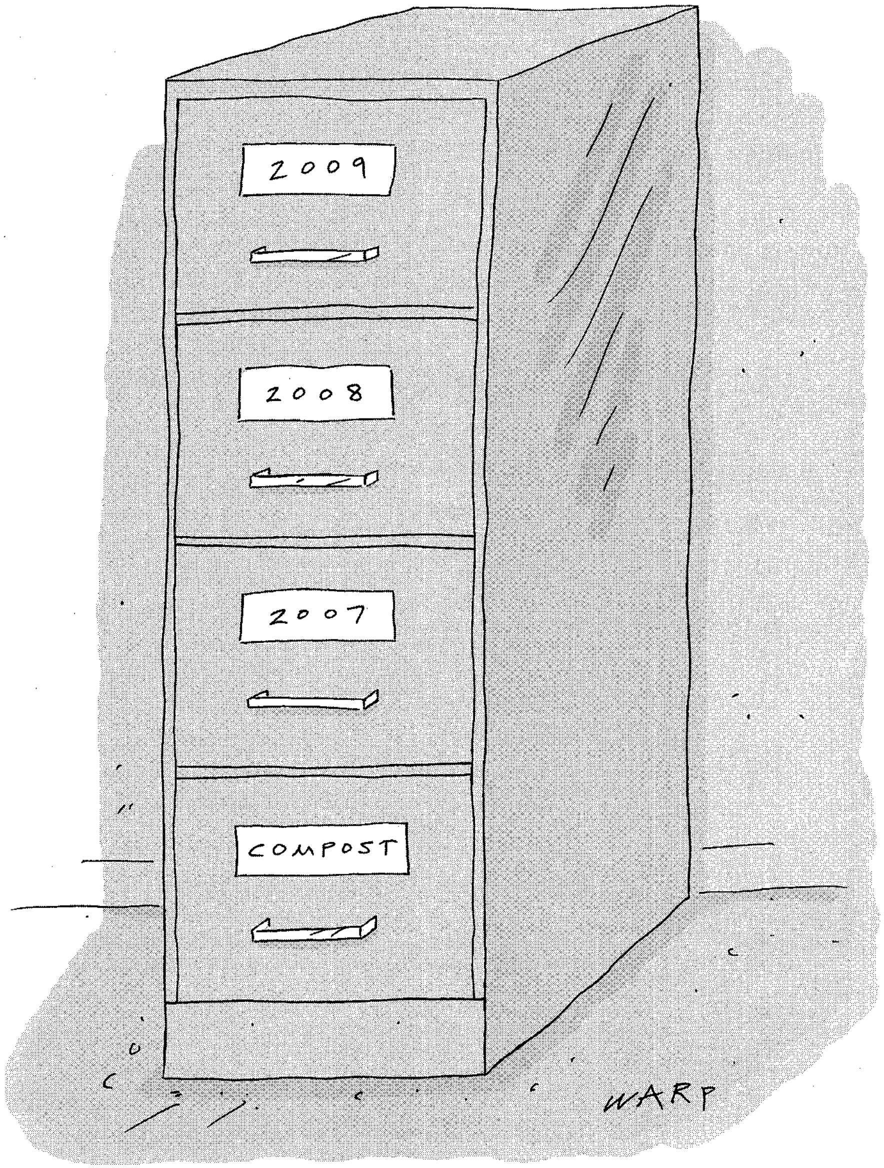
Hollywood was his last chance: if he could establish himself in the film industry, then maybe his health, his confidence, and his creative juices would return. Twice before he had made the trip West: the first time in 1927, when he considered himself "a sort of magician with words," and again, in 1931, when he was asked to adapt a popular novel of the day. Neither venture had panned out, and Fitzgerald returned East, feeling thwarted by studio bigwigs. Part of his problem with Hollywood had to do with the man he admired most in the industry: Irving Thalberg, the wunderkind who ran Universal City at the age of twenty-one, and M-G-M four years later. Thalberg was responsible for the assembly-line method of screenwriting—successive teams of writers tweaking the same story—which incensed Fitzgerald. Most writers, apart from a few script-savvy specialists like Ben Hecht and Anita Loos, were considered cogs in the machine, or, in Jack Warner's gracious phrase, "schmucks with Underwoods." Fitzgerald returned the compliment. "I hate the place like poison with a sincere hatred," he wrote to his agent, Harold Ober, in 1935. By 1937, however, adrift and miserable, he was desperate to return.

But Hollywood was in no hurry to have him back. It was only through the



Fitzgerald, in his own words, "just couldn't make the grade as a hack."

BARRY BLITT



Organic Filing

intercession of an old friend that M-G-M hired him—at a thousand dollars per week, for six months. Though he was, as he later put it, "a pretty broken and prematurely old man who hasn't a penny except what he can bring out of a weary mind and sick body," Fitzgerald boarded the train to Los Angeles with an optimistic step. He had a plan. Fitzgerald always had a plan. He liked to draw up schedules; he kept meticulous records; he made numerous lists; and he recorded every penny earned, borrowed, and paid back. For a man who led one of the messiest lives in literary history, on paper he was as organized as Felix Unger's sock drawer. "I must be very tactful but keep my hand on the wheel," he wrote to his daughter, Scottie, from the train. "Find out the key man among the bosses + the most malleable among the collaborators. Given a break I can make them double this contract in less than two years."

Despite his previous experiences, Fitzgerald still felt there must be a trick to writing a good screenplay. So he familiarized himself with the logistical bric-a-brac of camera movements, and watched popular films, like "A Star Is Born," over and over, pinpointing every single shot, and typing up his findings, two columns per page, until he had seven pages of:

GROUP SHOT
CLOSE UP
TWO SHOT
GROUP SHOT
CLOSE SHOT

MED. TWO SHOT
CLOSE SHOT
CLOSE SHOT
CLOSE SHOT
CLOSE UP

I came across this singular inventory when I visited the Thomas Cooper Library, at the University of South Carolina, early in September. I wanted to see for myself what Fitzgerald had been up to in La-La Land, and, as I sat in a temperature-controlled room on the mezzanine floor, examining the documents liberated from M-G-M's basement, I discovered just how hard he had worked at his craft. Fitzgerald approached each assignment with an intensity that must have puzzled his superiors. Given a script to revise, he would break it down, backstory it, advise the producers of its potential, and then start to add layers. "A Yank at Oxford" couldn't be just an innocent romance; it had to probe the connection between language and mores. "Madame Curie" couldn't be just the story of a woman overcoming the odds; it had to reveal the intricacies of a marriage between equals. Naturally, he became emotionally invested in the work, making it difficult to cede control, and, like the British colonel in "The Bridge on the River Kwai," he forgot that what he was building didn't belong to him, and, consequently, felt dismayed at its destruction.

Fitzgerald began his final screenwriting stint by writing "behind" another writer on "A Yank at Oxford," or, as Meyer Wolfsheim would say, "Oggsford." At some point, two other writers took over and jettisoned much of his dialogue. He was then handed a screenplay-in-progress of Erich Maria Remarque's popular novel "Three Comrades." After submitting his draft to Joseph Mankiewicz—who later produced "The Philadelphia Story" and wrote and directed "All About Eve"—he learned that he would be paired with a more experienced screenwriter. Disappointed, he resigned himself to a collaboration, and for five months the two men worked together, not always collegially, until they had a finished script. Mankiewicz, however, remained unimpressed, and decided to take a hand. His changes horrified Fitzgerald, who shot off a letter:

> To say I'm disillusioned is putting it mildly. For nineteen years, with two years out for sickness, I've written best-selling entertainment, and my dialogue is supposedly right up at the top. . . . I am utterly miserable at seeing months of work and thought negated in one hasty week. I hope you're big enough to take this letter as it's meant—a desperate plea to restore the dialogue to its former quality. . . . Oh, Joe, can't producers ever be wrong? I'm a good writer—honest.

In 1938, "Three Comrades" was named one of the ten best films of the year, but Fitzgerald took no pleasure in this. He thought Mankiewicz a vulgarian who had traduced the spirit of Remarque's novel and of *his* screenplay. Mankiewicz shrugged off Fitzgerald's accusations. He even claimed never to have received the pitiful letter. It was only decades later, with the revival of critical interest in Fitzgerald, that Mankiewicz felt compelled to defend his actions. "I personally have been attacked as if I had spat on the American flag because it happened once that I rewrote some dialogue by F. Scott Fitzgerald. But indeed it needed it! . . . It was very literary dialogue, novelistic dialogue that lacked all the qualities required for screen dialogue."

Despite Mankiewicz's retouchings, Fitzgerald's contract was extended for a year and his salary rose to twelve hundred and fifty dollars a week. "I am now considered a success in Hollywood," he observed wryly, "because something which I did not write is going on under my name, and something which I did write has been quietly buried without any fuss or row—not even a squeak from me. The change from regarding this as a potential art to looking at it as a cynical business has begun. But I still think that some time during my stay out here I will be able to get something of my own on the screen that I can ask my friends to see."

He thought that opportunity had arrived when he was asked to write a script about adultery for Joan Crawford. His screenplay "Infidelity" pleased neither his producer nor the censorship office, and the project was shelved (though someone briefly thought it might fly if it were renamed "Fidelity"). He then worked on "Marie Antoinette," followed by an adaptation of Clare Boothe Luce's "The Women," neither of which he saw through to the end. He spent three months on "Madame Curie" (from a treatment by Aldous Huxley) and then, in early January, 1939, was lent out to David O. Selznick for a polish on "Gone with the Wind." A week later, he was gone; M-G-M, meanwhile, without explanation, allowed his contract to lapse.

Fitzgerald initially resisted the idea that he was at fault. Somehow he managed to convince himself that screenwriting could be his métier and that he was capable of giving studio executives what they wanted. It was only toward the end of his life that he acknowledged that he "just couldn't make the grade as a hack—that, like everything else, requires a certain practiced excellence."

After leaving M-G-M, Fitzgerald went freelance, and was almost immediately teamed with the twenty-four-year-old screenwriter Budd Schulberg on a collegiate romance set during the annual Winter Carnival at Schulberg's alma mater, Dartmouth. Unfortunately, on the research trip East, Schulberg brought along two bottles of Mumm's for the flight, and by the time the two of them were over Kansas the writing was on the wall—which is to say that it never made it into a script. Fitzgerald drank practically the entire time they were in New York and Hanover and points in between; they were fired before they had even roughed out the story. Years later, Schulberg, who died last August, recounted their hapless collaboration in his novel "The Disenchanted" and also in an *Esquire* article that portrayed Fitzgerald as "tired, sick, embattled, vain and proud and painfully conscious of his fall from fame and fortune and creative productivity."

During the spring of 1939, with the Dartmouth debacle weighing on him, Fitzgerald drank heavily, fought with his lover, the gossip columnist Sheilah Graham, and took a chaotic trip to Cuba with Zelda, where he was beaten up for trying to stop a cockfight. He spent a week on the David Niven vehicle "Raffles," but, with no steady movie work, he began writing stories about a hack screenwriter named Pat Hobby. Then, one day in March, 1940, an independent producer by the name of Lester Cowan called him. Cowan had bought the rights to Fitzgerald's story "Babylon Revisited" and wanted Fitzgerald to turn it into a screenplay. Fitzgerald tailored the script, "Cosmopolitan," for Shirley Temple, and then spent an afternoon pitching the idea to her mother.

When word got out that Temple was considering "Cosmopolitan," Fitzgerald's stock rose. Darryl Zanuck, at Twentieth Century Fox, hired him to revise a script of Emlyn Williams's play "The Light of Heart." Buoyed by such interest, Fitzgerald began to refer to "Cosmopolitan" as his "great hope for attaining some real status as a movie man and not a novelist." "If I get a credit on either of these two last efforts," he wrote in October, 1940, "things will never again seem so black as they did a year ago when I felt that Hollywood had me down in its books as a ruined man—a label which I had done nothing to deserve." But Shirley Temple's mother dithered, and "Cosmopolitan" died, and, in November, Zanuck passed on his revision of "The Light of Heart."

Students of Fitzgerald's Hollywood days, who insist on demonstrating his ineptness, inevitably fasten on a scene from his draft of "Three Comrades." At one point, a young veteran, Bobby, places a call to a woman named Pat. As soon as Bobby recites the number, Fitzgerald cuts from his face to a celestial switchboard, where an angelic operator coos, "One moment, please—I'll connect you with heaven." We now cut to "St. Peter at the Pearly Gates, cackling: I think she's in." Back to: Bobby's face, "changing to human embarrassment," as Pat's voice says "Hello." An amusing conversation ensues between the awkward Bobby and the sophisticated Pat. We then cut to a satyr "who has replaced the angel at the switchboard, pulling out the plug with a sardonic expression." As the writer Tom Dardis observes, although such a sequence might work nicely in an Ernst Lubitsch comedy, it seems rather misguided in a story set in a grim post-First World War Germany.

Because Fitzgerald took his work seriously, his pedagogical instinct would invariably kick in and he would end up overwriting and overexplaining. Consider a setup from "Cosmopolitan":

> 88. LONG SHOT—THE SHIP DOCKING—shooting from the angle of those waiting on the pier. Band music loud and spirited.
>
> 89. BEHIND THE PICKET BARRIER
>
> Pierre and Marion Petrie waiting in the crowd. He is a Frenchman with a military tradition that makes him pompous and cer-

> emonious in his personality—but when he had taken off his uniform, back in 1919, it was apparent that nature had equipped him to be only a minor clerk.

"In 1919"? What sort of detail is that to put in a screenplay? Now follows a much longer, prosy summation of Marion Petrie's character and attitudes, all of which could be expressed in a few lines of dialogue instead of lengthy paragraphs:

> His wife Marion . . . is an extremely pretty American woman of thirty-two who must have hoped for a better match. She is now in a state of great emotion—barely controlled. She is agitated almost to the breaking point by the news of her sister's suicide, which reached her last night in Paris. Always before this she has felt a certain secret jealousy of her sister, who has had great wealth and luxury.

Fitzgerald is not without his defenders. In "The Cinematic Vision of F. Scott Fitzgerald," Wheeler Winston Dixon, a professor of film at the University of Nebraska, contends that Fitzgerald developed "an adroit and engagingly complex visual sensibility" based on fluid camera movement and astute intercutting. Dixon's case, however, rests entirely on "Infidelity," which, admittedly, does emphasize the visual over the verbal. In fact, Fitzgerald went a little camera crazy with "Infidelity." In his concern to register states of mind and the changing moods of a relationship, he has the camera constantly picking up and dropping off, trucking, panning, and shifting from a conventional two-shot to a P.O.V. shot. When two lovers suddenly realize they have been spotted, Fitzgerald insists that we see their reactions:

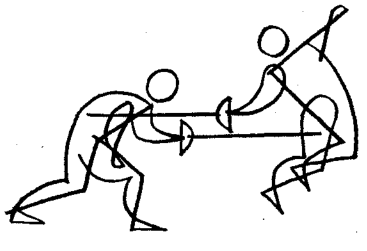
> (Close-up of Iris: Her eyes look down, then look up again, then stare.
>
> Two-shot of Iris and Nicolas. Nicolas looks up and sees Iris's expression. As he starts to turn and see what she is staring at, the camera drops them and pans very slowly around the room, including the sideboard, passing it and reaching the door.
>
> Althea, motionless, stands in the doorway, regarding them. We are seeing her in a medium shot from their angle and we hold on it for a moment.
>
> Two-shot of Nicolas and Iris from Althea's angle. Their faces are shocked and staring.
>
> Medium shot of Althea from their angle. . . .)

And so on for another half-dozen lines of instruction before the parenthetical is complete. Although aspiring screenwriters are admonished to "see it" before describing it, they soon learn, if they're lucky enough to get a script produced, that no amount of visualization on their part guides a director's framing of a scene. Fitzgerald certainly visualized "Infidelity," but, then again, his timing was sometimes off, and the script, which was never finished, relies excessively on flashbacks to convey a sense of what was lost. Fitzgerald could figuratively wield the camera, but usually he had too much to say to say it with a lens.

Fitzgerald wasn't naïve about the business; he knew that movies were "a salaried affair and along architectural rather than emotional lines." He also knew that screenwriting is an opaque craft requiring clarification by cameras and actors. Nevertheless, he couldn't overcome his aversion to its bare-bones structure. When handed a script, he tackled it as a critic or an editor rather than as a mechanic; he wanted to redesign the car instead of just making it run better. The sad thing is, he tried: he tried faithfully to give the studios what they wanted, without quite realizing how short his attempts fell.

Every so often, though, he put together a sequence that you know would work perfectly onscreen. There's a moment in "Cosmopolitan" when Victoria, a girl of eleven, having sneaked aboard a train heading for Switzerland, stumbles across a compartment occupied by a Circassian woman with three children. When a Swiss official asks to see the woman's passport, the mother "begins jabbering in obscure double-talk," and when he turns his attention to Victoria, who doesn't have her passport, she "pretends to jabber, too, in a language exactly like theirs." In an instant, Fitzgerald establishes the young girl's smarts.

The difficulty in evaluating Fitzgerald as a screenwriter lies in the problematic nature of screenwriting itself. While really incompetent scripts are easy to spot, even a well-wrought screenplay is a poor predictor of either artistic or box-office success. A script is simply a blueprint, whose potential to be mediocre or brilliant lies outside the screenwriter's purview.



You can't really tell what kind of tree will grow from the hundred-and-twenty-page acorn in your hands; too much depends on just about everything else—direction, cinematography, acting, music, editing. The unfinished nature of the form is, ultimately, what Fitzgerald could not abide. You can feel it in the prolixity of his scripts and in the dark grooves of his pencilled notes: he wanted every screenplay to impart a moral lesson while illuminating the hidden facets of its characters.

Fitzgerald's scripts were hobbled by the same quality that lifted his fiction above the superficial: the complicated nature of his mind. He had started out thinking he had genius and a special destiny, and it was this belief in an ideal version of himself that, when transmuted into narrative form, won him both a wide audience and critical esteem. But that idealized self in all other respects eluded him, not because he drank too much or behaved badly but because he was a writer at war with his own inclinations. A self-professed "moralist at heart," he also wanted to be a hero and an entertainer. Goethe looked out from one eye; Lorenz Hart from the other. Although he came to believe that "life is essentially a cheat . . . and that the redeeming things are not 'happiness and pleasure' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of struggle," he always remained someone who depended to an unhealthy extent on the good opinion of others. And it was this dichotomy—the receptiveness to life's most profound lessons coupled with a need to win over the world by the force of his personality—that made him capable of being, in equal measure, aesthetically rigid and blatantly manipulative.

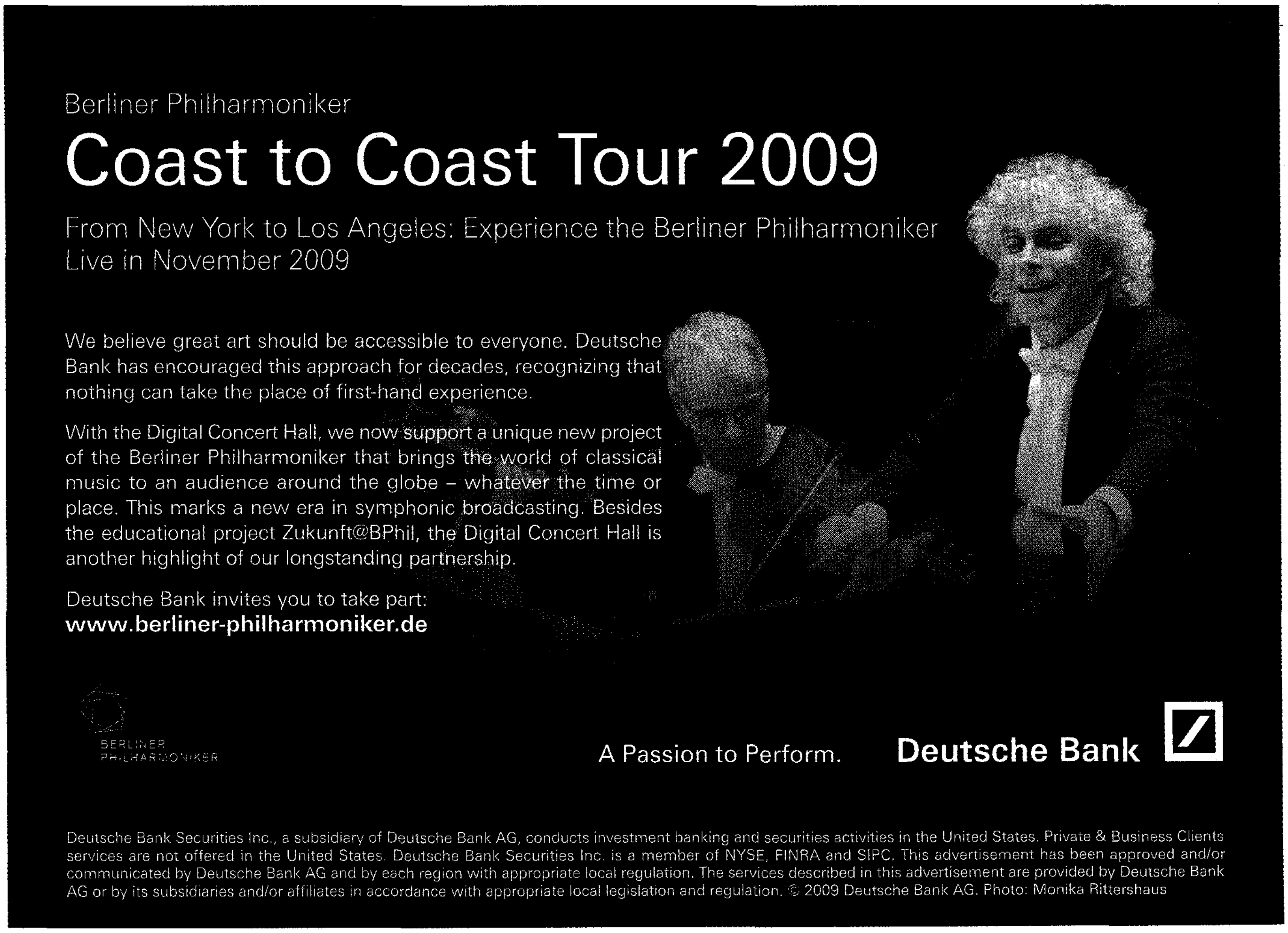
In the end, Fitzgerald's attitude to Hollywood was as inconsistent as his attitudes toward everything. The warring impulses in him never really subsided. He was alternately sensible and reckless; worldly and adolescent; down to earth and somewhere above Alpha Centauri. He said that he knew more about life in his books than he did in life, and he was right. In life, he simply wanted too much. He wanted to be both a great novelist and a Hollywood hot shot. He wanted to box like Gene Tunney and run downfield like Red Grange. He wanted to write songs like Cole Porter and poetry like John Keats. He wanted the trappings of wealth but was drawn to the social idealism of

Marx. He wasn't so much a walking contradiction as a quivering mass of dreams and ambitions that, depending on how he was feeling and whom he was talking to, created a dizzying array of impressions. Anita Loos noticed that people in Hollywood "treated him like an invalid," and George Cukor found him "very grim, dim, slightly plump." Anthony Powell, however, after having lunch with Fitzgerald in the M-G-M commissary, noticed "a schoolmasterish streak, if at the same time an attractive one; an enthusiasm, simplicity of exposition, that might have offered a career as a teacher or university don." Fitzgerald's own schoolmaster at Princeton, Christian Gauss, would not have been surprised by these disparate opinions. Fitzgerald, he said, reminded him of all the Karamazov brothers at once.

In Hollywood, the brothers were continually elbowing each other aside. One day, screenwriting could be a "tense crossword puzzle game . . . a surprisingly interesting intellectual exercise"; the next day, it might represent "a rankling indignity." Unresolved feelings bubbled up in him to the very end: "Isn't Hollywood a dump," he wrote to a friend in 1940, "in the human sense of the word. A hideous town, pointed up by the insulting gardens of its rich, full of the human spirit at a new low of debasement." Sure it was—but it was also, as he well knew, part of the American character. It was Hollywood that lay stretched out before him when he jotted in his notes for "The Love of the Last Tycoon," "I look out at it—and I think it is the most beautiful history in the world. It is the history of me and of my people. . . . It is the history of all aspiration—not just the American dream but the human dream and if I came at the end of it that too is a place in the line of the pioneers."

Such words remind us that Fitzgerald drew his faith not from camera angles or even plotlines but from sentences; and what draws us powerfully to his work is the sensitive handling of emotional yearning and regret. When he was revising "Gatsby," he characterized the burden of the novel as "the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world so that you don't care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory." As Arthur Mizener, Fitzgerald's first biographer, pointed out, "It is precisely this loss which allows Gatsby to discover 'what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass.' " Perhaps Fitzgerald could have captured this heightened state of awareness in a script, but was this what the studios were looking for? Fitzgerald's vision of becoming a great screenwriter was no more realistic than the likelihood of his returning a kickoff or writing a hit Broadway show. But, then, Fitzgerald was not one to give up on dreams; if he had, he could not have written so beautifully, so penetratingly, about their loss. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM/VIDEO
Richard Brody on "The Women."



Berliner Philharmoniker

Coast to Coast Tour 2009

From New York to Los Angeles: Experience the Berliner Philharmoniker
Live in November 2009

We believe great art should be accessible to everyone. Deutsche Bank has encouraged this approach for decades, recognizing that nothing can take the place of first-hand experience.

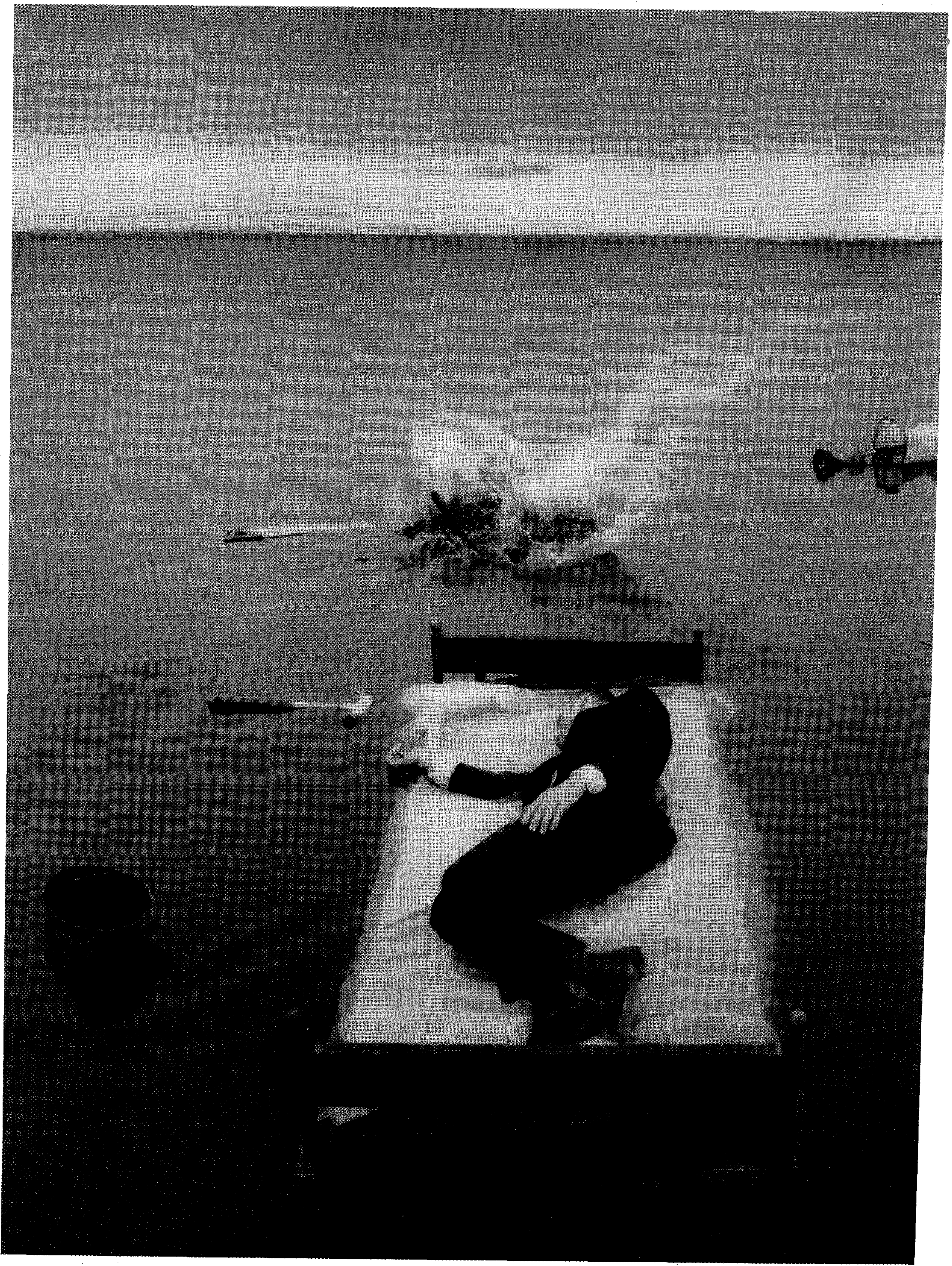
With the Digital Concert Hall, we now support a unique new project of the Berliner Philharmoniker that brings the world of classical music to an audience around the globe – whatever the time or place. This marks a new era in symphonic broadcasting. Besides the educational project Zukunft@BPhil, the Digital Concert Hall is another highlight of our longstanding partnership.

Deutsche Bank invites you to take part:
www.berliner-philharmoniker.de

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER

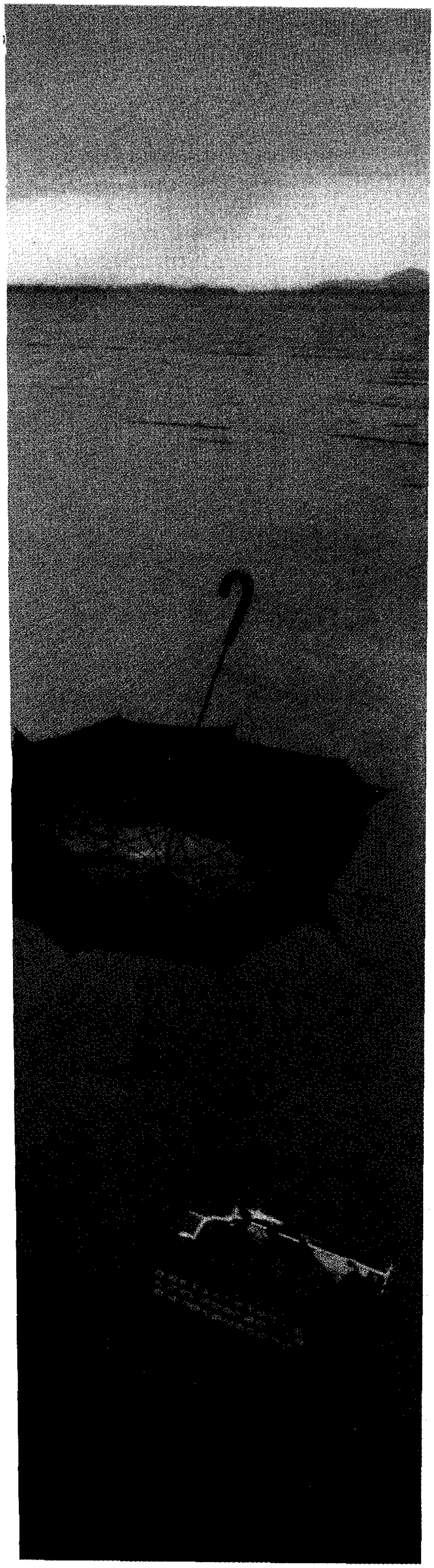
A Passion to Perform. Deutsche Bank

Deutsche Bank Securities Inc., a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank AG, conducts investment banking and securities activities in the United States. Private & Business Clients services are not offered in the United States. Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. is a member of NYSE, FINRA and SIPC. This advertisement has been approved and/or communicated by Deutsche Bank AG and by each region with appropriate local regulation. The services described in this advertisement are provided by Deutsche Bank AG or by its subsidiaries and/or affiliates in accordance with appropriate local legislation and regulation. © 2009 Deutsche Bank AG. Photo: Monika Rittershaus



ROBERT & SHANA PARKEHARRISON, "LUCID DREAM" (2005)/JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY

One researcher thinks that, for some sufferers, nightmares are a "learned behavior." He says, "Dreams naturally want to change. People u



ave nightmares often don't recognize that."

A REPORTER AT LARGE

NIGHTMARE SCENARIO

Can we learn to rewrite our bad dreams?

BY MARGARET TALBOT

The first patient to arrive that morning at the nightmare clinic—Maimonides Sleep Arts & Sciences, in Albuquerque—was a forty-two-year-old administrative assistant named Toni. She wore jeans, black suède sneakers, and a dark floral-print top. Her curly black bangs, large eyes, and pale, heart-shaped face gave her the look of a silent-movie heroine. Toni has endured bad dreams since childhood, but recently they have grown worse. Her father left her family when she was a baby, and died when she was twelve. Her mother, with whom she had been close, died a year ago, in Toni's own bed; she had moved into Toni's apartment after developing cancer. An only child, Toni isn't married, and has no children. Lately, her nightmares have centered, with distressing frequency, on her mother. In the dreams, her mother is alive again, but she is suffering as she did on her deathbed: desperate for morphine, her eyes dull, her mouth dry and hanging open. Her mother is often trying to tell her something, and looking at her beseechingly, but Toni can't make out the words. These nightmares fill Toni with an overwhelming sadness, and sometimes she wakes up in a cold cloud of fear. She finds herself staring at the clock, counting the hours and, eventually, the minutes, until she has to get up to go to work.

Toni also has apnea, a condition in which breathing is interrupted repeatedly during sleep, making the night much less restful. The apnea had first led her to Maimonides, a few months earlier. The staff had done a sleep evaluation and supplied her with a masklike device that keeps the user's airways open. Then the doctor in charge of the clinic, Barry Krakow, surprised her by saying that her nightmares might be equally susceptible to treatment. Toni was eager to try: nightmares had been with her all her life, unwanted visitors that she couldn't turn out.

Many therapists and doctors would also be surprised by the claim that nightmares can be treated directly. In the psychological literature, nightmares have conventionally been thought of as a "secondary" phenomenon—the by-product of anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Treat the underlying problem, the thinking goes, and the nightmares should fade away. But about twenty years ago Krakow became fascinated with the idea of confronting the nightmare as a problem in itself. Even people who believe that our dreams are freighted with hidden meaning, he reasoned, had to admit that there were few benefits to be gained from the nightmares of many trauma survivors: scenarios that revisit the original horror again and again, making the dreamer fear sleep. (For Samuel Coleridge, chronic bad dreams were a "night's dismay" that "saddened and stunned the coming day.") Frequent nightmare sufferers often became convinced that they were at the mercy of their subconscious minds. But what if you could train people to rewrite their troubling dreams?

In 2001, Krakow published a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that involved a hundred and sixty-eight women who had been the victims of rape or other sexual assaults, and who were beset by nightmares. Some of these dreams replayed the crimes, but many did not. Nightmares, it turns out, rarely involve literal replays of incidents in waking life; post-traumatic dreams come the closest to doing so, and even these often alter the characters or the setting of the episode. Krakow's theory was that although the subjects' bad dreams had likely been triggered by the assaults, they persisted because they had become a habit—a "learned behavior." (He has called the condition a "dream rut.") Perhaps the women could alter this dynamic and transform their nightmares into good, or at least better, dreams by rehearsing more benign scenarios during the day.

Half the participants maintained their typical sleep routine. The rest were given instruction in evoking pleasant and detailed images in their minds. (In a typical practice exercise for imagery rehearsal, subjects listen to relaxing music, close their eyes, and spend ten minutes recalling a recent day at the beach.) The women in this group wrote down one of their disturbing dreams and were instructed to change it in any way that they wished. They then wrote down the new version in full, and were asked to spend between five and twenty minutes a day conjuring the revised dream. A menacing character, such as a rapist, could metamorphose into a kindly one; a plane that crashed in flames could become one that landed gracefully on a smooth runway; the deep water in which the dreamer was drowning could suddenly reveal itself to be as shallow as a kiddie pool.

The women maintained this regimen for six months, consulting regularly with doctors. At the end of the trial, they were given a formal evaluation. Those who had completed the imagery-rehearsal therapy were having significantly fewer disturbing dreams; their insomnia had improved; and their post-traumatic stress had lessened. Several studies since then have produced similar results with different populations, including elementary-school children and war veterans with combat-related P.T.S.D. At the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, the Pentagon has helped fund an ambitious ongoing study of nightmare treatment and imagery-rehearsal therapy for soldiers returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Anne Germain, a Canadian sleep researcher who is leading the study, told me, "It's fascinating to me how people can change the content of a nightmare to a non-nightmare. I genuinely believe that people *know* what they need. Some will change a character; some will include new ways of protecting themselves. One of the advantages of the technique is to give patients the flexibility to change the nightmare in keeping with their own beliefs—their own identity."

Toni had been working on rewriting her nightmares for about two weeks. At home, she had been going through a handbook written by Krakow, "Turning Nightmares Into Dreams." She told Linda Trujillo, a health educator who was taking her history, that she was at the point of training herself to summon soothing images before falling asleep. These images were mostly of Ireland, where she had recently travelled with a friend: the emerald countryside, the frequent rain. "Everything is so pretty and peaceful there," she told Trujillo. "It's like a nice dream I had when I was little, where the sky was overcast and I was right on the beach, with the cliffs all around me."

Trujillo nodded. Twenty-three years old, she had been a nightmare sufferer herself before she began to work at the clinic and trained herself in imagery rehearsal. She attributes her nightmares to her parents' abusive relationship. Lurid and demon-filled, the dreams persisted long after her father had left the house and her mother was happily remarried. Trujillo, who is competent, calm, and cheerful, said that her nightmares were "so debilitating to me during the day that I would just want to cry. I couldn't believe that my mind could come up with these morbid images."

After a while, Krakow, a wiry sixty-year-old with glasses and short, steel-gray hair, joined us. A former emergency-room physician, he came late to sleep medicine and has a convert's zeal for the benefits of a good night's rest. He is a man of springy, focussed energy, and frowns on caffeine, limiting himself to a cup of cocoa in the afternoon. When he told me, "It's not that everyone in the world has a sleep disorder, but—they probably do," he laughed, but he wasn't entirely joking.

Down the hall were a series of rooms where patients participate in sleep studies, watched over by lab technicians. Electrodes monitor a patient's heart rate and brain activity, and microphones record snoring patterns. On a table in the hall was a jigsaw puzzle—a suitably unexciting activity for insomnia patients. The room where patients talk about their nightmares is less clinical: dark wicker chairs, silk pillows, torchère lamps.

Krakow sat down, steepled his fingers, and asked Toni if her nightmares had changed at all. "They're not as severe," she said, softly. "My mom is still in them, of course, but she's not always sick, and the settings have changed. They're more like, I don't know, streets and hotels."

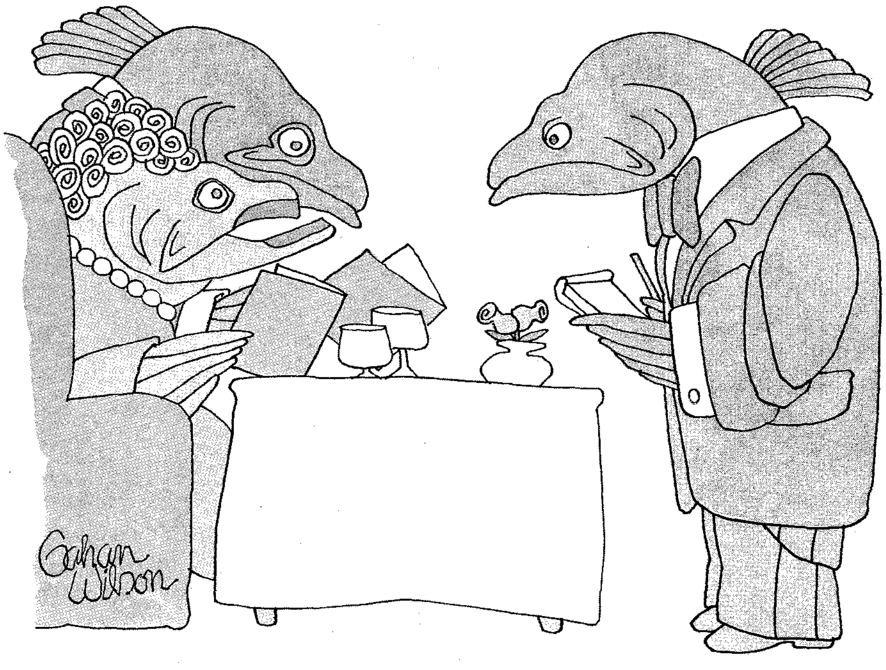
Krakow nodded. "Prior to that, the content was constant?" he asked. His conferences with patients tend to be brief, more like a doctor's checkup than like a psychoanalysis session.

Yes, Toni said: "They'd be at my mom's house, or my aunt's trailer—in my home town, where I haven't lived for a long time. And there'd be freaky occurrences and family fights."

"So they're not as disturbing now?" Krakow asked.

"Oh, they're disturbing," Toni said. "I'm in competition with different people for things. I'm very anxious, panicked." Toni was seated on the edge of a leather couch, hunched forward, her hands clasped between her knees.

Krakow asked her if she attributed the changes in the dreams to anything, and Toni, who has a fragile, tentative air, said that she didn't know for sure, but that it



"I'll have the angler if you're sure he's perfectly fresh."

had all happened during the past two weeks.

"That's a good prognostic sign," Krakow said. "Your mind is moving, changing. Nightmare patients, especially post-traumatic ones, may have a narrower range of dreams, with similar intensity, and the patient is so overexposed that they're thinking, Is this ever going to go away?" He asked her to come back in a month. Before she left, Krakow told her, "Dreams naturally *want* to change. People who have nightmares often don't recognize that."

Ross Levin, a sleep specialist who has a private practice in New York, also uses imagery-rehearsal therapy to treat nightmares. He recently told me about a male patient who kept having terrible dreams about the blades of the ceiling fan above his bed turning into knives. "His mother was schizophrenic," Levin explained. "One time, when he was a child, he woke up and saw her standing over him with a knife. I mean, that's about as bad as it gets. That's, like, 'Psycho' territory." Still, the man hadn't suffered from nightmares until someone broke into his apartment one night, while he was sleeping. Levin recalled that the patient "came up with the idea of decorating the ceiling fan with plants. He was really into plants. He did it for real—put all kinds of viney things on the ceiling fan—but then he also incorporated it into his daytime dream routine, so that when he saw the blades in his mind at night they would turn into leaves."

A woman I spoke with in New York, an art-history graduate student in her late twenties named Yael, had been plagued for years by dreams set during the Holocaust. She had been raised in Israel, and moved to the United States three years ago. Yael's husband, a doctor, told her about a sleep clinic at Montefiore Medical Center, in the Bronx, and she made an appointment. After several sessions with Shelby Harris, a psychologist who uses imagery-rehearsal therapy, she began reimagining the concentration camps of her recurrent nightmares as, of all things, summer camps. The gray-and-white tones of Middle Europe were replaced by bright, sunlit landscapes. She told herself, "Yes, I'm here, but there are trees and a lake, and everything is fine." Within two weeks, her dreams had conformed to the new narrative.

In another nightmare, Yael was under water, and desperate to come up. "At that moment in my dream, I realized that I was going to die," she told me. As she lunged toward the surface, she saw a ring of sharks that she'd have to swim through first. She recalled that, in the dream, she said to herself, "Why do they have to be *sharks*? They could be dolphins." She went on, "I dreamed that I swam right up through a ring of dolphins. I woke up so happy."

Despite such outcomes, imagery-rehearsal therapy has its detractors. Some patients feel that it is too simple, even gimmicky. And some therapists say that the technique—which is an intellectual cousin of cognitive-behavioral therapy—is an insufficient approach, because it does not seek to get at the roots of the disorder it treats. In other words, nightmares may be the least of a patient's problems. One defender of a more traditional therapeutic approach is Ernest Hartmann, a professor of psychiatry at the Tufts University School of Medicine. He says, "I suppose you could say, 'Well, yes, there are reasons behind them, but, still, it's the damn nightmare that's bothering the patient, so let's treat that.' But I'm not a great enthusiast." Other therapists prefer to prescribe a drug. Prazosin, originally developed to treat high blood pressure, has been shown to relieve nightmares in some chronic sufferers—though the nightmares typically resume once patients stop taking it.

Increasingly, however, scientists are taking the view held by G. William Domhoff, a psychologist and sociologist at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a leading dream researcher. He calls imagery-rehearsal therapy "a clear advance," and argues that the technique, in addition to being effective, reflects contemporary scientific thinking about dreams. Dreams may or may not perform a cognitive or emotional function—that question is still fervently debated among academics. But, even if the utility of dreams is unclear, they still have meaning, Domhoff says, for they are "stories that are clearly based on some of our deepest concerns."

In ancient Greece, dreams were often thought to be premonitions—messages from the gods. For Plato, dreams also represented a frightening breakdown of reason. "In these circumstances nothing is too outrageous," he writes. "A person acts as if he were totally lacking in moral principle and unhampered by intelligence. In his dreams, he doesn't stop at trying to have sex with his mother and with anyone or anything else—man, beast, or god."

The notion of dreams as otherworldly visitations persisted in Western culture into the nineteenth century. Coleridge, who frequently awoke his household by screaming during nightmares, was influenced by popular philosophical writings that attributed bad dreams to malevolent spirit forces. The image of the nightmare as an incubus—a demon hovering over, or straddling, a recumbent figure—invoked both the helplessness of the sleeper and his or her vulnerability to rapacious sex. (It also may have served as an explanation for wet dreams.) "The Nightmare," the Romantic painting by Henry Fuseli, became one of the most reproduced images in European art; its ravished sleeper, with her soft, outflung limbs entwined in gauzy bedclothes, suggested that in slumber we are subject to bewitching depredations beyond our control. In the Victorian era, the scientific consensus held that dreaming was pathological. As one journal essay put it, "No one dreams when he is sound asleep. Dreams take place only during an imperfect or perturbed sleep." Meanwhile, dream books—coded guides to symbols and portents in dreams—became enormously popular, keeping alive the idea of dreams as prophecies.

In 1899, Sigmund Freud published his manifesto, "The Interpretation of Dreams." He produced not only a revolutionary argument for the vital importance of dreams as "the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious"; he also established the idea that they were about the past, not the future. Through dreams, Freud argued, we had access to our most deeply submerged personal histories, including memories of early childhood. Tracking down those hidden meanings involved complex detective work for the analyst—a translation of symbols nested artfully within narratives.

Freud had comparatively little to say about nightmares, which didn't fit his theories particularly well. Nightmares did not preserve sleep by disguising forbidden longings; they often jolted people awake. And they were hard to classify as wish fulfillments, even as elaborately concealed ones. Not that Freud didn't try. Some of his patients' horrifying dreams were wish fulfillments, he maintained, because the patients were masochists. In other cases, a gruesome dream could be peeled back to reveal an erotic wish at its core. He once argued that a nightmare that plagued a young female patient—dominated by the image of her little nephew dead, in his coffin—represented her secret desire to be reunited with a family friend she had a crush on, and who would likely turn up at the funeral.

In his 1920 book "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Freud amended the idea that all dreams are wish fulfillments. After the First World War, Freud had been much affected by the recurrent nightmares of shell-shocked veterans, in which they returned again and again to scenes of battle. These awful dreams, he allowed, had nothing to do with the pursuit of pleasure and the release of tension that most dreams embodied. Instead, they represented a compulsive pattern of repetition that was the mind's attempt to create some sort of stability.

Other psychoanalysts elaborated on Freud's thinking on nightmares. In 1931, Ernest Jones published an influential book arguing that "an attack of the Nightmare is an expression of a mental conflict over an incestuous desire." Freudian ideas about dreams held sway until the final decades of the twentieth century, when critics began denouncing them as pseudoscience. (In 1993, Frederick Crews famously declared that psychoanalysis "seems to produce a good many more converts than cures.") For doctrinaire Freudians, Hartmann told me, dreams were seen as "meteorites that fall to the earth and are to be picked apart for clues to this distant, alien dream world." But most therapists have begun to see dreams as more like gemstones—distinctive but not unfamiliar, and not so hard to make sense of. When Hartmann analyzes a dream, he's less interested in decoding it fully than in understanding "the emotional gist," which is often conveyed in a central image—a raging fire, a merciless pursuer. "And the emotional gist usually shows a great deal of continuity with whichever concerns are dominating our waking lives," he says.

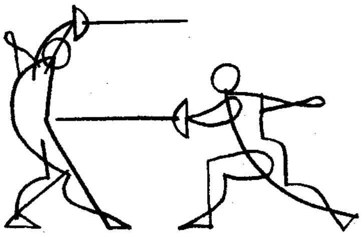
The next patient at Krakow's clinic was a forty-four-year-old woman named Mary. She had frequent nightmares, which had recently become disturbingly violent. She was unemployed and had just taken in two friends (and their pets) who had lost their homes. Her relationships with both her mother and her husband sounded troubled, and she was on medication for depression, migraines, and nerve pain. She met first with Trujillo, who asked her if she had suffered any "traumatic exposure."

"Pretty much all my doggone life," Mary said. She was raised in a strict Catholic household, and was beaten daily as a child. At twenty, she became pregnant by a married man, and gave the baby up for adoption. Mary, who was wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "Earth is our Mother," came off as intelligent and caustically funny. She said of some pills she had been taking, "I was up to a hundred and fifty milligrams on those bad boys," and described a former doctor as a "cocky S.O.B."

When Trujillo asked her about nightmares, Mary said that she'd had them almost nightly since childhood. "They're more intense now," she said. "I'm getting killed, or I die in them. When I was younger, it was always like I was being chased and I couldn't get away or I couldn't defend myself." Asked to describe her current emotional state, she said, "I'm more anxious. I'm more pissed off." She was angry with her former boss, whom she had found overbearing. She told Trujillo, "I've had some *strange* nightmares lately. A lot of them are in Gary, Indiana, and Gary is, like, nowhere near an airport, but in one there's a plane crash and we see it coming but it's too late. We can't do anything about it. I can't get out of the way. In one of them, I was literally splattered up against my house." In another recurring nightmare, she's ripping off the earrings of women she's angry with, leaving them bloodied; in another, which takes place in a church, she tries to save a woman from an assailant with a semi-automatic weapon but ends up being shot herself.

Trujillo said to Mary, "Your dreams can teach you something." They were a call of distress, she said, a way for her brain to prod her into asking, "Hey, what's going on? I need to handle this."

Krakow came in and had a consultation with Mary. After a while, she confided that she sometimes thought about suicide. To Krakow, this was a clear indication that she wasn't ready to do imagery rehearsal. In his handbook, he emphasizes that nightmare therapy initially can be upsetting. "In the first few weeks, you may find yourself spending too much time thinking about the problem of bad dreams, and for some people this can promote more bad dreams," he warns. "Moreover, working with imagery and imagination . . . can also stimulate your mind to produce more images, and some of these images may be in the form of more disturbing dreams." The nightmares don't usually begin to abate for at least two weeks.



Krakow told Mary that she should wait to begin nightmare treatment until traditional therapy, or new medication, had made her more stable. "As much as I'm a believer that nightmares make coping harder, I don't want to put more burden on you right now," he said.

The final patient of the day was Joan, who is thirty-seven, a sergeant in the Air Force, and currently the administrator of a medical clinic on a military base. All her life, Joan has had striking dreams, and has been able to recall them with cinematic detail. She is confident and articulate, and in some ways she seemed more fascinated by her nightmares than petrified by them. For Joan, it seemed, the main problem with her bad dreams was that they had exacerbated a protracted case of insomnia that first gripped her after she returned from a tour of duty in Afghanistan, in 2008. Joan was in charge of travel for Air Force personnel, and felt a lot of pressure to help people get home promptly. Still, she doesn't feel that she experienced any particular trauma, and thinks that the insomnia developed because she didn't adjust well to the changes in time zone and work schedule which accompanied her return to America. "I started getting migraines and they were perpetuating the insomnia," she told me. "It was a combination of not sleeping well and ruminating and dwelling on the frustration of not sleeping."

Then a foundering romantic relationship began preoccupying her when she woke up in the night, and her insomnia worsened. The dreams intensified and darkened. "I'm having these very emotionally jolting dreams," she told me. "I'm exhausted, and then when I actually get to sleep I'm getting woken by these dreams."

This was Joan's second visit to the clinic. She is tall, with a firm handshake, a warm,

"Fall makes him sad."

• •

crinkly smile, and artfully cut shoulder-length hair. She wore a pressed oxford shirt, diamond earrings, and chic black-leather boots. Meeting with Trujillo, she said that she had been striving, with some success, to curb her tendency to check the clock each time she woke up. "After Dr. Krakow shared with me the problems with time-monitoring, I made it my intention to not look at the clock," she said. "It was probably a couple of days, and I started to feel a dramatic difference. My energy level was up. I found difficult situations more tolerable."

Joan's demeanor is so coolly logical—she spoke of sleep as a "valuable commodity"—that it was a little surprising when she described one of the wild nightmares that disrupt her sleep. "One night, I had this amazing 'Jurassic Park'-type dream. There were huge snakes and serpents sailing through the air and, below me, I could see these gargantuan crocodiles and clear water and I'm just trying to escape them. There are armies of spiders—all things that *terrify* me. And, in my dream state, I'm just marvelling at the size of these things that I'm trying to avoid being eaten by, or bitten by, or, you know, just savagely ripped apart by."

She went on, "So I'm negotiating my way through this underground maze of Jurassic creatures. And then I'm in this huge dirt cave, and I can see up about a hundred yards ahead of me is this opening—the mouth to freedom." She saw that some children were also trapped inside the cave. "One of the little girls, I realize, has been bitten by a highly poisonous spider. Her brain starts hemorrhaging—it's actually quite sick—and her head just splits open and this mass of yellow pus is just exuding from it, and little spider eggs, thousands of them, are just exploding from the ooze." She paused. "In my dream state, I remember looking up at that opening, and hearing myself saying that this is the only way out of this place." She woke up, terrified and exhausted. "But I was also thinking how amazing it is that I'm able to dream in color, and in several dimensions. If there could be a video recorder for the brain, that would be so fantastic."

I asked Joan if she'd miss these surreal dreamscapes if therapy made them disappear. Earlier, Krakow had told me, "We occasionally have people who drop out of therapy, saying, 'I attach too much meaning to my nightmares.'" But Joan was adamant: "I wouldn't regret not having the dreams." She wanted to sleep soundly again. Joan seemed like a good candidate for imagery-rehearsal therapy. She has a strong visual imagination, and a capacity for lucid dreaming—the experience of recognizing that you are dreaming while you are dreaming, sometimes to the point of being able to steer the narrative. No more than twenty per cent of people regularly have lucid dreams, as Joan does, but there is some evidence that you can be trained to do so.

As we talked, I realized that Joan was less attached to her nightmares than excited by the idea that the brain projected different movies for itself every night, and that she could help edit them. "I feel it's amazing, the ability you have to participate in your dreams and direct yourself," she said. "It's adrenalizing."

One standard definition of a nightmare is a dream so frightening that it awakens the sleeper. (Think of a scene from a B movie, in which a troubled sleeper thrashes around, like a fish on a line, and sits up with a full-throated scream.) But a lot of recent dream research suggests that this is inaccurate. Less than a quarter of chronic nightmare sufferers report that they are always awakened by their nightmares. And, in a recent study, Antonio Zadra, a psychologist at the University of Montreal, found that fear was the signal emotion in seventy per cent of nightmares. In the remaining thirty per cent, other emotions predominated: sadness, anger, frustration. The most bizarre nightmare scenarios are not necessarily the most terrifying, or the most common. In another Zadra study, people reported disturbing dreams about "interpersonal conflicts" or feelings of "sadness/helplessness" more frequently than they reported ones about bloodthirsty demons or humongous insects. We tend to think that our dreams are weirder than they generally are, because we remember best the ones with Felliniesque characters and inexplicable lurches: the ex-husband who suddenly becomes a giant, vicious panther. (And we don't usually see the metamorphosis—one moment he's this, the next he's that—which is weird in itself.) As Zadra puts it, "There's a reporting bias in what we choose to share. You're not going to say to your wife at the breakfast table, 'You'll never believe what I dreamed last night! I was stuck in traffic!'"

Depending on the study, between eight

and thirty per cent of adults report that they have nightmares at least once a month, and in the course of a lifetime virtually everybody has them. The numbers are higher when people keep a dream log. Sleep studies in a laboratory don't offer a more precise accounting of the phenomenon, because—to the great annoyance of nightmare researchers—people almost never have nightmares while under scientific observation. No one knows exactly why, but Ross Levin told me, "For most of us, being watched and looked over might be a little creepy—you know you have wires attached to you, you're on camera—but for nightmare patients it might actually be comforting." Barry Krakow suggests that embarrassment over nightmares might be another reason for people's inhibition when they are under scrutiny by a stranger.

Nightmares are more common among children than among adults, and more common among women than among men. The gender difference may be explained, in part, by the fact that women are better than men at remembering their dreams, and perhaps more willing to admit that they have nightmares. The German dream researcher Michael Schredl has coined the term "dream socialization" to describe a cultural predisposition among women and girls to discuss their dreams, and assign meaning to them. (How many unicorn-embossed dream journals have you seen on the bedside tables of teen-age boys?) It's also true that women, who tend to report feeling more stress than men, wake up more often in the night, and sleep interruptions make dreams easier to remember. Still, even when dream recall is taken into account, women have more nightmares than men, starting in adolescence, which is also when women begin experiencing higher rates of depression and anxiety.

Most nightmares, like most dreams we remember, occur in the stage of sleep known as REM, or rapid eye movement, which accounts for about a quarter of the time that the average adult spends asleep. During REM periods, we are physically immobilized but physiologically active: heart rates are elevated, breathing is irregular. Nightmares are different from night terrors, which typically occur in the first, slow-wave stage of sleep, and which tend to be plotless flashes of panic. Nightmares are narratives. They have major and minor characters, settings, plot twists, and nuanced emotional valences.

The themes of nightmares, however, seem to be surprisingly universal. In the few studies that have been done across different cultures, the most common scenario involves the dreamer being pursued or attacked. Michael Schredl found, in a recent study of more than a thousand young adults, that some other common subjects are finding yourself in threatening surroundings, taking a test for which you aren't prepared, suffering paralysis, being late to an important event, and having people close to you die or disappear. Then there are the common scenarios that are disquieting, if not exactly nightmarish: suddenly having all your teeth fall out, for instance, or showing up in public naked. People around the world seem to alight on the same sturdy metaphors for shame, loss, and mortality.

Though scientists agree on the broad themes that animate nightmares, they haven't looked very systematically at the form of storytelling that occurs in a nightmare. "We know a lot about their frequency," Antonio Zadra says. "But we know almost nothing about their actual content. How do they unfold? Do they tend to start off as negative scenarios or become that way, and, if the latter, then what's the trigger? How does the plot turn? Is it the entrance of a particular character?" Zadra has recently been trying to pinpoint some basic narrative commonalities; one of his first preliminary findings is that most bad dreams are set indoors.

In a similar spirit, William Domhoff has, for many years, been analyzing long dream series—like those of a widower he calls Ed, who lost a beloved wife, Mary, to ovarian cancer, and who for twenty-two years kept a journal in which he recorded a hundred and forty-three dreams about her. ("I am walking with Mary, who is wearing a white dress," Ed writes in one entry. "She looks terrific—as she had prior to the last recurrence of the disease. She has been resurrected for a particular purpose that is not made clear in this dream. I comment on how terrific she looks, even though she had been in the grave only a short while ago. There was no decay nor any indication that she had been dead. But as I speak I realize I should not have said anything, because she doesn't know she had been dead and is now resurrected. My remarks disturb her greatly. Her mood changes from one of smiling happiness into surprised sorrow. Something in her belly begins to bulge and throb.") Many of his nightmares conformed to this structure: Ed is at first overjoyed at seeing Mary again, then is suddenly unsettled by the realization that she is dead, or horrified, as in the dream above, at having to tell her that she is.

For the most part, though, our sense of what nightmares generally look and feel like comes from fiction, especially from movies—from the surreal dreamscape that Salvador Dali designed for Alfred Hitch-

GR
mstevens

"This is Russell. Russell opens all my jars."

cock's "Spellbound" to the twisted fantasias of David Lynch. Such cinematic sequences succeed better than most nightmare studies do in re-creating what it feels like to be transfixed by frightening images that are screened in the projection room of one's mind. It makes intuitive sense, then, that the relationship also works in reverse—if filmmakers draw on nightmares, their films, in turn, sometimes give us bad dreams. Parents are always warning kids that scary movies will sow nightmares. Scientific support for this notion is, so far, only tentative. In a study published in 2000, when children were asked to attribute their bad dreams to a cause, they did frequently cite something that they had seen on TV. There is also evidence that dream villains and monsters evolve over time, in response to popular culture. Michael Schredl looked at several nightmare studies from the twentieth century, and found that dreams of the bogeyman were common in the twenties; dreams of ghosts, devils, and witches reigned in the fifties and sixties; and those of movie villains predominated in the nineties. Tore Nielsen, who directs the Dream and Nightmare Laboratory at Sacré-Coeur Hospital in Montreal, told me that "Freddy Krueger has really gotten into dreams, and so has Voldemort." Still, at least one recent study, conducted by Schredl with two hundred and fifty German children between the ages of nine and thirteen, found that nightmares were not more frequent among the kids who watched more TV or played more computer games. "Nightmares are clearly reflecting the media, and what children see there," Schredl says. "But it's not clear, at least for now, that it increases the actual number of nightmares."

The phenomenology of dreaming remains surprisingly imprecise. For example, according to Eric Schwitzgebel, a philosopher at the University of California, Riverside, most Americans now claim that they dream in color. So did most people who asked themselves that question before the early twentieth century, including Aristotle, Descartes, and Freud. But in the middle of the twentieth century most people began reporting that they dreamed in black-and-white. In 2006, Schwitzgebel and two Chinese colleagues, Changbing Huang and Yifeng Zhou, performed a study on Chinese high-school and university students. Those who belonged to the groups that had been watching television and movies in color the longest were the most likely to report dreaming in color. Schwitzgebel's team speculated that, in fact, "dreams may be *neither* colored nor black and white, leaving the colors of most of their objects unspecified, as novels do. Perhaps it takes time and energy to fill in all the colors in a richly detailed scene, with the result that most of our dream imagery is fairly sketchy, even if that sketchiness is not recognized by the dreamer."

Yet if one gives credence to the accounts of dreams by Sigmund Freud and his patients—many of which are overstuffed scenarios that take pages to lay out, and include formidable chunks of dialogue—dreams today often seem to be quicker and choppier than they once were, more closely resembling a YouTube video than a novel. If you ask friends to describe their nightmares, you'll frequently hear film terms: suddenly we cut to this, or pan to that, or dissolve to the stalker, standing silhouetted in the doorway. Dreams have always favored the visual: we don't experience them primarily as auditory phenomena, and hardly at all as olfactory ones. But more than that, as the British psychoanalyst Susan Budd writes in a 1999 essay, "Modern patients don't often produce the kinds of dreams that Freud had. Modern dreams mostly seem to be shorter and more fragmentary, and this is because the dream is undoubtedly a cultural as well as a neurobiological product."

Although the impact of scary movies on nightmares is uncertain, researchers have no doubt that frightening events in the real world trigger more frequent nightmares—even for people with no direct experience of the event. When the Loma Prieta earthquake hit California, in October, 1989, ninety-two college students living in the San Francisco Bay Area had about twice as many nightmares—about earthquakes, but about other scary stuff as well—in the following weeks than did a control group of students in another part of the country. Ernest Hartmann studied dreams in the weeks after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Surprisingly, not one of the nearly nine hundred dream reports he collected was about planes flying into towers. At the same time, the dreams he looked at had significantly more, and more intense, central images than a typical set of dream reports. Often, the bad dreams centered on other kinds of disasters, such as tidal waves.

According to Hartmann, nightmares that stay with us for a long time—what Carl Jung called "big" dreams—are almost invariably dominated by one potent image. As he sees it, these images, though harrowing, are ultimately fortifying. Dreaming about trauma, like talking it over in therapy, helps render it less "uniquely distressing," he says, and weaves it into a fabric of memories that we can live with. For most people, the terror quotient gradually recedes and may be replaced by feelings of vulnerability. These new visions may "portray something or someone other than the dreamer as victim," and they won't necessarily seem like nightmares. (Hartmann cites an example of a man who was grieving over the death of his mother. He reported dreaming that "this huge mountain has split apart and there are pieces lying around. I am supposed to make arrangements to take care of it.") This process of "integration" occurs, Hartmann believes, because "the powerful new experience has been incorporated into the dreamer's emotional knowledge," better preparing him to face crises in the future.

This is clearly not what happens with the four to eight per cent of people who can't shake off nightmares, and have them at least once a week. Some of these people suffer from nightmares because they have P.T.S.D. But others have not been touched by any obvious trauma, and may not otherwise suffer from anxiety, depression, alcoholism, or a serious mental illness that can undermine sleep. No one knows for sure why such people are susceptible to chronic nightmares. But one theory, proposed by Hartmann in the late eighties, and which has been supported by subsequent studies, is that these dreamers have "thin boundaries." When given a diagnostic questionnaire, these people tend to score high on sensitivity and imagination; they easily identify with their childhood self; and they have a propensity for daydreaming and déjà-vu experiences.

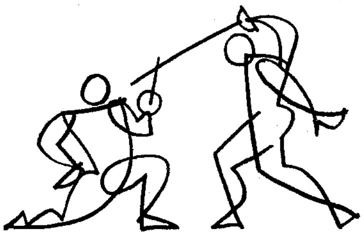
Reading about Hartmann's theory, I thought of Yael, the art-history graduate student who was preoccupied by nightmares of the Holocaust. She had told me, "With movies, I feel more—I *relate* more than other people seem to. Afterward, I'm still thinking about it—more than that—I'm putting myself in the situation the characters were in during the movie and thinking, What would I do? How would I react? More so, even, with a book. Because you really imagine it."

In Yael's case, this feeling was particularly intense when the movie or the book had to do with the Holocaust, the subject that had so fascinated and appalled her as a girl. She had read everything she could about it, frequented Holocaust museums and memorials, even walked down the street imagining herself as a child living in Nazi Germany. At thirteen, she made a deliberate decision to stop immersing herself in Holocaust history. "I just couldn't really handle it anymore," she says. Now, as a grad student, she is focussing on seventeenth-century Dutch art. But not long ago she was supposed to write a paper about the paintings of Samuel Bak, a Holocaust survivor. Though his images were "not blunt or obvious," she said, she started "doing a lot of stuff to avoid writing that paper. I was afraid that the images would trigger nightmares."

Yael's story suggests that some people might be more sensitive to nightmares than others. Several recent studies have looked at that question and concluded that a subject's psychological well-being was more tied to her attitude about having nightmares than to how often she had them. As Antonio Zadra, the Montreal researcher, put it, "Some people will have a nightmare a month and be very distressed by them. Others may have them weekly and think, I'm not going to get therapy! They must be doing something useful."

In recent decades, as psychoanalysis has lost its cultural prestige, new theories about dreams have begun to emerge. Many of them try to gauge the evolutionary role of dreams. According to Antti Revonsuo, a Finnish cognitive scientist, dreams may have evolved in humans as "threat simulations," in order to help protect the species. Like pilots training on flight simulators, or gamers evading robots on computer screens, our ancestral selves used dreams to rehearse ways of avoiding danger. In a 2009 paper in the *American Journal of Psychology,* Revonsuo and a co-writer, Katja Valli, theorized that "modern humans still possess this ancient defense mechanism," though it probably no longer fulfills its original biological function, since the modern environment is so different from the one in which the system evolved. (Fewer mastodons, more traffic.) One problem with this notion is that even though many nightmares involve perilous scenarios, the threats are often not at all realistic but, rather, oblique, metaphorical representations of disquiet, or inexplicable obstacles that keep us from getting somewhere we urgently need to go. Moreover, very few nightmares climax with the dreamer defeating whatever it was that was threatening him. In a 2006 study by Zadra, the threat was vanquished in only seventeen per cent of recurring dreams that contained a menacing element; the subject woke up thirty-seven per cent of the time; and in forty per cent the threat was fulfilled. The threat-simulation theory is what evolutionary scientists call a "just-so" story: a seductive but unprovable supposition about the origins of human behavior.

One of the newest theories about the function of nightmares comes from Ross Levin, the New York sleep specialist, and Tore Nielsen, the Montreal researcher. Their view is that dreaming may serve the adaptive function of "fear memory extinction": desensitizing the sleeper to something scary through repeated exposure in a less frightening context. Dreams recombine memory fragments, some of which are scary or anxiety-producing, into a palpably alien scenario. Someone might dream of walking down a dark, deserted street where a shadowy figure is striding, threateningly, toward her. But dreams also add memory elements that are not frightening—"non-aversive," in Levin and Nielsen's behaviorist terminology. The crepuscular figure might step into a pool of light, revealing herself to be the dreamer's best friend. Like Revonsuo's theory, this one presumes that, for evolutionary reasons, our brains are primed to be vigilant, always evaluating potential threats. Levin told me, "Dreaming is kind of like nightly exposure. We've got this bank of memories, and REM sleep seems to activate them neurochemically. The limbic system gets massively activated and projects up to all these areas of the brain and seems to unlock access to these memories. Memory doesn't get encoded as a whole thing—it gets broken down in these little bits and pieces." This process, Levin says, is a "perfect recipe" for taking some of the sting out of a frightening stimulus. If you're afraid of snakes "and you see a snake but it's in a zoo, it's a little bit more O.K. If it's in a movie, same thing. And it's the same with a dream." Emotions drive this process, Levin claims—the more stress you are under, and the more anxious you tend to be generally, the more that emotion will flood your sleep. If too much negative emotion floods it, then the "fear memory extinction" system breaks down and you end up with repeated nightmares instead.



The model is thought-provoking, but it offers a fairly narrow view of dreams. William Domhoff, the Santa Cruz scholar, says, "Dreams are not just about our memories. They're about our concerns—how we conceive the world. In waking life, my thoughts aren't just driven by what I'm looking at outside my window. I'm also imagining this, anticipating that. Something similar is true for dreaming life. We have this thinking capacity that goes beyond reassembling memory fragments, and that results in the use of images and the juxtaposition of ideas in a much more creative and figurative sense."

Domhoff has come to believe that nightmares don't really help us solve problems. He notes that people who rarely, if ever, recall their dreams "seem to do just as well in life as recallers." Moreover, recurrent nightmares don't seem to be doing their sufferers any service. But that's not to say that dreams in general aren't meaningful, or useful. People who reflect on their dreams can gain insight into their priorities and preoccupations, past and present—or, if they're creative types, dip into them for artistic inspiration. Domhoff's Web site, DreamBank.net, has collected some twenty-five thousand accounts of dreams, including nightmares. You can find dream reports from, among others, a child molester, blind people, a transvestite, college students, grade-school kids, and widowers such as Ed. Trolling through them is a little like being able to read the minds of all the people in your subway car: fascinating, embarrassing, overwhelming. Following the precepts of his mentor, Calvin S. Hall—a psychologist who published a popular book, "The Meaning of Dreams," in 1953—Domhoff

NOTE CARDS

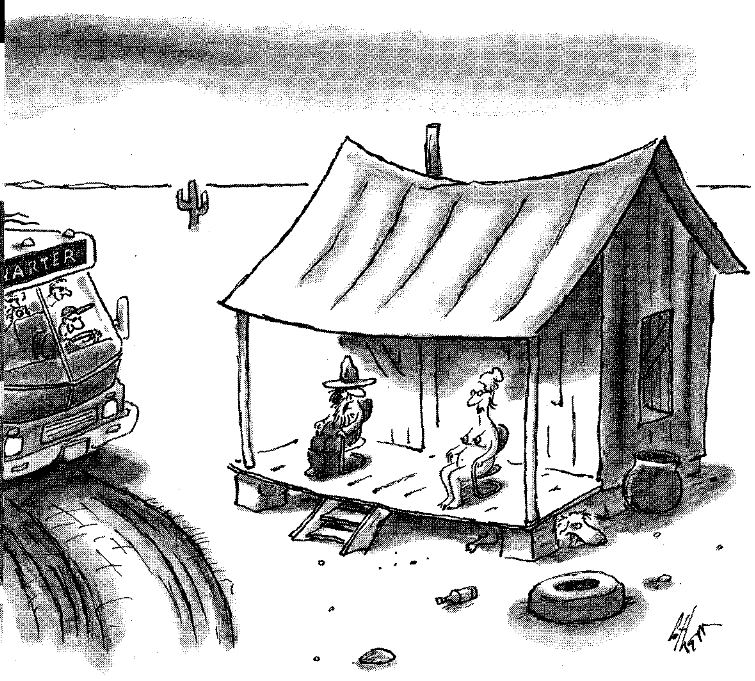
BAD MOM CARDS
“My God, do you realize the year’s half over?”

CUSTOM SERVICES
FROM THE CARTOON BANK

Let us help you create the perfect mailing for your special event, including:

Wedding Invitations
Baby Announcements
Change-of-Address Cards
Holiday Greetings
Birthday Bash Invitations
Thank-You Notes
Graduation Party Invitations

or personalized service, call
1-800-897-8666.



Cover yourself, woman! Here comes another tour bus.”

• •

—three times a week instead
t. Bad dreams woke her up
l when they did it was easier
sleep, partly because she had
oothing herself with relaxing
n of Ireland, and with New
usic. She continued to do
tion, and felt that it helped.
ed a box of old photographs,
ding time looking at images
in her fifties, to try to replace
n of her nightmares. And it
in Toni’s new dreams about
er mother was vibrant, her
full again. Often, the new
a comic tone: in one, her
d at Toni’s house in a car
ewing extravagantly out of
something in an “I Love
e. Toni’s waking life was
g. She had left the apart-
she had taken care of her
and moved into a more spa-
he was looking forward to
d trip with a friend to San
the band AC/DC was giv-

had been having the rough-
switched to a new antide-
ow felt more “clearheaded.”
houghts had disappeared,
d some new people to talk
upportive and understanding, including Linda Trujillo, from the sleep clinic. She still had severe nightmares, though, and remained interested in imagery-rehearsal therapy. “I want to try all the tools out there that I can use,” she said.

Joan, the Air Force sergeant, was still trying to work out her romantic relationship, and was up for a big promotion at the base. She continued to have nightmares that were remarkably phantasmagoric, but, like Toni, she found it easier to get back to sleep when they woke her. She felt more rested when she started the day. And even though her nightmares remained lush—the images staying with her longer after she woke up—she felt she had more control over them. Recently, she said, she’d been having a nightmare about tornadoes, and she’d experienced a moment of lucid dreaming. “In this last dream, the sky was just blackened with funnel clouds,” she recalled. “I was up in the sky. I wasn’t very fearful of what was going on, though I kept hearing myself saying, ‘It’s just a dream, *fly* through it.’ So I could feel my dream-self calming down. But I was still dreaming.” Joan paused. “It was a fantastic feeling.” ♦

NEWYORKER.COM/GO/OUTLOUD
Margaret Talbot talks about nightmares.

LETTER FROM CAIRO

THE PHARAOH

Is Zahi Hawass bad for Egyptology?

BY IAN PARKER

Zahi Hawass, the Egyptian archeologist, is a lordly, well-dressed man of sixty-two, with white hair and small dark eyes. He likes to take the passenger seat in his chauffeured S.U.V., but he doesn't turn his head when he's talking to someone in the seats behind; he looks directly ahead, and shouts at the windshield. He often asks rhetorical questions along the lines of "God gave me this talent for public speaking—what can I do?" Visitors to his office, in Cairo, may hear him on the telephone to an airline representative, saying, "No, *madam!* A first-class ticket, for a first-class passenger!"

Among the National Geographic Society's Explorers-in-Residence—Jane Goodall and a dozen favored others—Hawass is the only one to have a staff of thirty thousand people. For the past seven years, he has been the secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, or S.C.A., which oversees Egypt's ancient sites and artifacts, and controls access to them. Hawass, who in June played host to President Barack Obama on a ninety-minute tour of the Pyramids and the Sphinx, at Giza, near Cairo, is the international star of Egyptology, thanks largely to a steady flow of television documentaries and books to which he is attached, with titles built out of the words "mummies," "gold," "sand," and "mystery." He is also the field's C.E.O.—or, as he puts it, "in charge of everything in Egypt." It's as if Jacques Cousteau, in his heyday, had taken on the task of approving everyone else's scuba-diving permit.

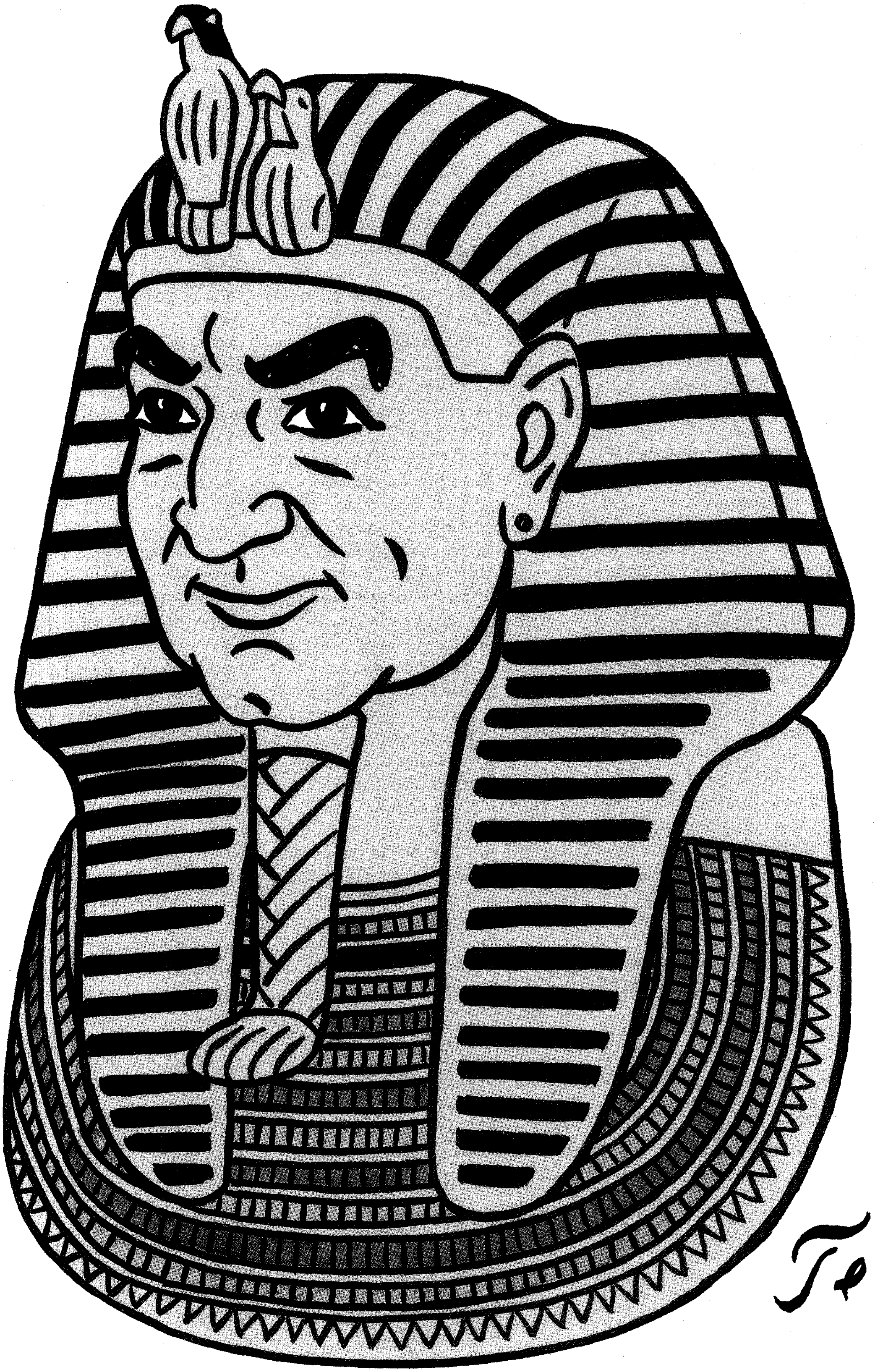
The oddity of this role, at the intersection of archeology, show business, and national politics, makes controversy unavoidable, but Hawass is so often found in the middle of an argument that one can usually assume the fuss is strategic. He appears to be enlivened and empowered by battles with enemies, real or imagined: overseas archeologists, foreign museums, amateur theorists who speculate that the Pyramids were built by lizards, other "assholes." And he enjoys making provocative announcements in which his force of character must carry listeners past skepticism, as when he says that he is about to find the body of Cleopatra, or make a German museum return its bust of Nefertiti, or somehow copyright the shape of a pyramid. When I met him, this summer, his dominant conversational tone was rebuttal laced with invective and self-regard, built on the premise—it has some merit—that the international standing of Egypt is powerfully connected to the standing of Zahi Hawass. He has no doubt that his fame is a vital national asset.

One morning in early July, he was driven from central Cairo to meet an American television-news crew that was waiting for him at the Pyramids, about ten miles away. On the elevated freeway, Hawass's driver pushed through the traffic as if insulted by the existence of other cars. ("If he slows down, he's fired," Hawass told me later, laughing. "If I'm dying, I'm dying. I don't mind if I'm dead.") During the ride, which gave a view on both sides of cinder-block apartment buildings topped with clusters of satellite dishes, the conversation turned to "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs," an exhibition of artifacts from the Cairo Museum, which, since 2005, has visited seven cities around the world, in an echo of a similar show in the nineteen-seventies. I had met Hawass in San Francisco, a few days earlier, when the exhibition opened at the de Young Museum, in Golden Gate Park. "I thought that sending an exhibit like King Tut can make good money, and this is what I *did!*" he said in the car. Hawass speaks English fast, with a strong accent, and in a tone that, after a while, you come to realize doesn't denote outright fury. He said that, by next spring, when "Tutankhamun" is due in New York, on its final U.S. stop, the show will have made more than a hundred million dollars for the S.C.A. "We sent King Tut thirty years ago, and Egypt did not make one penny." (This is not quite true.) "And if people say it's commercial? Fuck you! Our exhibit is more scientific than any exhibit in any museum in the world."

Hawass, who has a Ph.D. in Egyptology, had touched on a key theme: the contrast, as he sees it, between Egypt's past acquiescence to foreign cultural demands—he made the point with a vivid sexual image—and the alpha-male assurance of his tenure at the S.C.A., which he sees as marked by strong rules, good publicity, profit, and new museums. (He has opened half a dozen of them.) He made a jab at one of his predecessors. "He has no personality!" Hawass said. When he was seen with this man in public, he said, "people always greeted me and they didn't know him. He got very upset. I said, 'The people greet me because there is something I did that they see.' "

The S.U.V. barely braked as it passed through the gates at Giza, then mounted the desert plateau, where most vehicles are banned. The Great Pyramid suddenly filled the view ahead. Across the sand, in all directions, workers raised their hands in salute as the car passed. We were the only fast-moving dot in a monumental landscape, which gave our progress a video-game quality. We skirted the pyramid—not quite a squeal of tires—then slowed before the Sphinx. Hawass reached into the back seat for a brown, sweat-stained Stetson hat that, at some moment subsequent to the release of "Raiders of the Lost Ark," became a key Hawass accessory. He strode onto a wooden walkway, where the American TV crew had set up, doubtless briefed to a point of terror about Hawass's views on punctuality. The first question was "Doctor, this is a very historic area. Can you tell

Hawass has allowed the space between the discipline of Egyptian archeology and its popularization to shrink almost to nothing.



FLOC'H

us about it?," which made one consider, with sympathy, how much time Hawass must spend with people delighted to hear any well-worn proclamation. The temptation to say "I can *smell* royal mummies"—one that Hawass does not always resist—must be strong.

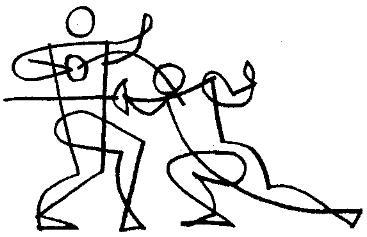
Hawass likes to tease Omar Sharif—the star of "Doctor Zhivago," and a friend and frequent dining companion of his—that he has become the better-known man. Sharif, in turn, calls Hawass "a tremendous actor" and a great communicator. Lecturing in Atlanta not long ago, Hawass filled a theatre with a paying audience of forty-five hundred. John Ford, the president of the Discovery Channel—which is an avid consumer of ancient-Egyptian material—values Hawass for combining academic authority with "the enthusiasm of a nine-year-old boy. It's as if he's seeing things for the first time." The History Channel is developing a multi-part series with Hawass at its center. When I visited Alexandria with Hawass in July, Japanese tourists snapped their attention from Pompey's Pillar to him, and asked, with wonder, "Is it *really* Zahi?"

Among Egyptological colleagues, Hawass's reputation is less clear. Egyptastic, a satirical Web site run by two Britons, posts *Onion*-style fake-news stories that often reflect professional annoyance with him. ("Hawass: 'Ancient Egyptians Worshipped Hawass-like God' "; "Hawass Discovers Tomb of Boy-King Tutankhamun.") A recent story began, "Zahi Hawass has today denounced his own wife as a 'liar' and a 'friend of the chaos god Seth,' following her claim last week to have discovered the couple's briefly misplaced television remote control."

Egyptology is a small, backbiting world. Internationally, fewer than seven hundred scholars work full time in the field, in no more than a hundred institutions; people labor for decades waiting for a professor to move aside, or die. But this can only partly explain the strength of feeling about Hawass. Colleagues complain that he excavates incautiously, puts public relations before science, hypes his own archeological finds, and takes credit owed to others. Even his admirers are likely to concede some of the charges. Salima Ikram, a wry Pakistani professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo, has been a friend of Hawass's for two decades; when we met in Egypt, she described the Hawass regime, in a matter-of-fact way, as a "dictatorship," and noted that S.C.A. press releases had announced archeological discoveries in Egypt "without even the *name* of the person who's been working there for twenty years." She went on, "It's an appropriation of intellectual property. And, for us, for academics, what else do we have?" But she was largely supportive, noting the solid foundations of Hawass's expertise, and his undeniable stamina. "He's trying to do in ten years what takes fifty years to do," she said.

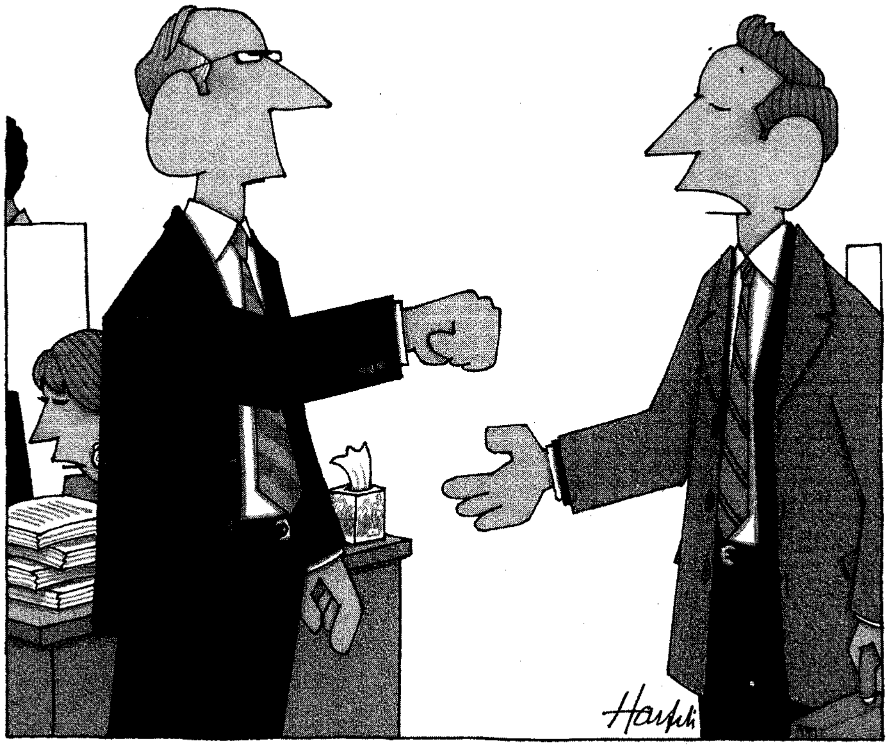
Others, speaking less warmly, asked for anonymity, on the ground that the S.C.A. can withhold or withdraw permission to work in Egypt. Hawass has publicly banished perceived rule-breakers, including Joann Fletcher, a British archeologist who, in a 2003 television documentary, claimed to have identified the mummy of Queen Nefertiti; she had not first submitted her findings to the S.C.A., as the rules require. (A member of Fletcher's team disputes this.) Among the wary scholars, one said that some Egyptologists hope *not* to make the kind of spectacular discovery that would cause Hawass to take an interest in it. Another, in Cairo, said, "He dictates knowledge. He declares something to be true, and everyone's supposed to accept it without properly evaluating the hard evidence." Another said, baldly, "This man is destroying our academic discipline." In the view of Dan Lines, one of the creators of Egyptastic, who has left Egyptology, and can thus speak without fear of exile, "He's ridiculous, and yet you have to take him very seriously. He has influence not only over the people who have to deal with him but over the heritage of an entire country."

Yet even Hawass's harshest critics are willing to place his swagger in context; that is, they recognize that ancient Egypt has been largely in foreign hands for two hundred years. As Hawass reminded me, of the sixty-three tombs that have been found in the Valley of the Kings, near the city of Luxor—the most famous being Tutankhamun's, opened by an Englishman in 1922—not one was excavated by a team led by an Egyptian. Hawass's task—in effect, to Egyptianize Egyptology by means of a personality cult—is not an easy one.



Duncan Lees, a British specialist in three-dimensional imaging and a sometime television presenter, almost came to blows with Hawass a few years ago, when they worked on a television broadcast from an archeological site in the western desert that Hawass has named the Valley of the Golden Mummies. Between 1999 and 2001, Hawass oversaw a dig there that unearthed more than two hundred mummies of the Greco-Roman period. It was an interesting site, but one observer has said that the work there was "scandalous, and done just for TV"; later, visitors found themselves walking on a desert littered with human bones. By 2004, excavations had stopped, but they were restarted for a week of live TV broadcasts, and Lees was hired by a production company to make laser-derived measurements of the site. He was dismayed by Hawass's irregular on-air archeological style: Hawass broke through the mud-brick entrance to a tomb with a hammer, and he handled a human skull carelessly. Lees also found him imperious. One day, Lees stepped between Hawass and a man he was scolding. "He couldn't believe I'd done that," Lees recalled. "He flipped. He said to me, 'You'll never work in Egypt again. You'll never get home. Your equipment will disappear.' " (Hawass, recalling the incident, said that Lees was at the site "without official permission, without my knowledge. I was so angry.") Lees said of Hawass, "I believe he's a greedy man. He likes the kudos, he likes people fawning all over him, but at the same time he's also very protective of how his country is perceived, and there's every reason for Egyptians to be paranoid about people coming in and shitting on their heritage."

According to Salima Ikram, "Zahi's agenda is, one, to improve the Supreme Council of Antiquities as a body. Two, to improve the level of Egyptology as practiced by Egyptians. Three, to push forward Egypt in a positive way to the world, so people focus on antiquities rather than on fundamentalism or terrorism. And, four, to push forward Zahi Hawass. At different times, different things take the upper hand. And he's not always conscious of what he's doing, and sometimes he acts in haste and repents.”



“I suppose a fist bump would be more sanitary.”

The complexities of Hawass's job are immediately suggested by the layout of his offices, in a modern building on a quiet street in downtown Cairo. Visitors approach Hawass through an outer office staffed by Egyptians. Here supplicants, wearing once-a-year ties, measure their status by noting whether or not they have been offered tea.

But a person who followed the corridor around to the left, then turned right, would find another room connecting to his inner office—from the other side. Hawass calls this his “foreign office.” In July, interns from Princeton were assisting two young Egyptologists, one Canadian and one British. Janice Kamrin, an American with a Ph.D., whom Hawass calls “my right hand,” was away when I visited. The team's tasks include editing Hawass's writing in English, which appears in glossy books, on his Web site, and in a column for *Al-Ahram Weekly*, an English-language newspaper. (This process is at times quite thorough, and can amount to more than just editing.) A framed clipping of the entry about Hawass in the 2006 edition of the *Time* 100 list of influential people hung on the wall, as did a letter from Hillary Clinton congratulating him on his appointment to the S.C.A. directorship.

Kamrin later told me, “My job is to be invisible.” The English-language room is not clandestine, but the two-office operation points to the life of politics required of the man who sits in between them, beneath a photograph—faded to mauve in the sunlight—of President Hosni Mubarak. Hawass is an Egyptian government official who keeps an Emmy on his bookcase. (It's a “commemorative” Emmy, bought by the winner of a regional Emmy, to thank Hawass for his part in a show.) Elliott Colla, of Georgetown University, who has written on the history of Egyptology, recently said of Hawass, “To the Egyptians, he's upholding claims of Egyptian sovereignty and claims of modern Egyptians to be the direct descendants of ancient Egyptians. And, insofar as any Egyptians care about Egyptology, that's pretty much all they care about.” At the same time, Hawass “keeps foreign interest flowing, because without that he wouldn't have a job. He understands that he has to keep the door open not just to scientists but to the Discovery Channel. He understands that Egyptology has a fully symbiotic relationship with Egyptomania.” He went on, “Kitsch is the life-support system for the science of Egyptology. Scientists don't get funding unless the media is keeping up the flow of images.”

I spent a few days in and out of Hawass's office, where he likes to take phone calls while simultaneously signing handwritten invoices and rebuking subordinates. In the manner of many powerful bureaucrats, Hawass layered his meetings one on top of another; the office was always full. Bruce Ludwig, a wealthy American friend of his, and a long-term funder of archeology in Egypt, told me that, in the same office, he once watched the representative of an Asian country try to push an envelope of cash across the desk. “Zahi got out of his chair, screaming at the guy,” Ludwig recalls. Hawass has certainly made money beyond his S.C.A. salary—he says that President Mubarak once jokingly asked him if he earned as much for a lecture as Henry Kissinger—but not in this way, according to many.

While I was at the office, a Zahi Hawass Day plaque arrived from Indianapolis, and a European delegation tried to close a deal for a Tutankhamun exhibit. A graphic designer showed Hawass possible jackets for a new book of his, “The Lost Tombs of Thebes.” (He has published more than a dozen books.) After quickly approving one of the designs, Hawass noted, in the pleasant tone of a person forced to say something crushingly obvious, “I think you have to enlarge the name.” I also heard him speak on the phone with Kathleen Martinez, a Dominican lawyer turned archeologist who, in recent years, has been searching for Cleopatra's tomb in the north of the country, near Alexandria. He and Martinez were anticipating a visit to Egypt by Leonel Fernández, the President of the Dominican Republic; Hawass regretted that he would not be in Cairo to deliver the full “Obama tour.” (According to Hawass's memory of Obama's visit, the President called him an “international treasure”; and, when Hawass told Obama that he looked like King Tut, he replied, “I've been told that.”)

One afternoon, I found Hawass in the middle of his office, trouserless, changing his suit while in conversation with Brando Quilici, an independent Italian television producer who has now made four long-term, expensive films with Hawass, for the Discovery Channel and National Geographic.

“What are you doing, doctor?” Quilici asked him.

“I’m making myself pretty,” Hawass explained. He had an interview with Egyptian television later in the day.

When these men first met, in 2003, Hawass was already famous enough to have received lewd e-mails from female fans overseas. But Quilici seems to have enhanced the brand; his skill is in drawing drama from Egyptological stories that lack new tombs or gold. (He built one nail-biting scene out of a computer reboot.) He puts Hawass at the center of films made in a hybrid style that combines some sweaty activity underground—hat, denim shirt, arched eyebrows—with forensic revelation in the laboratory. Designed above all for male viewers in their late teens and twenties—“C.S.I.” fans—the films talk up a gap in knowledge until it has become a “mystery,” and then, urgently, the mystery is solved.

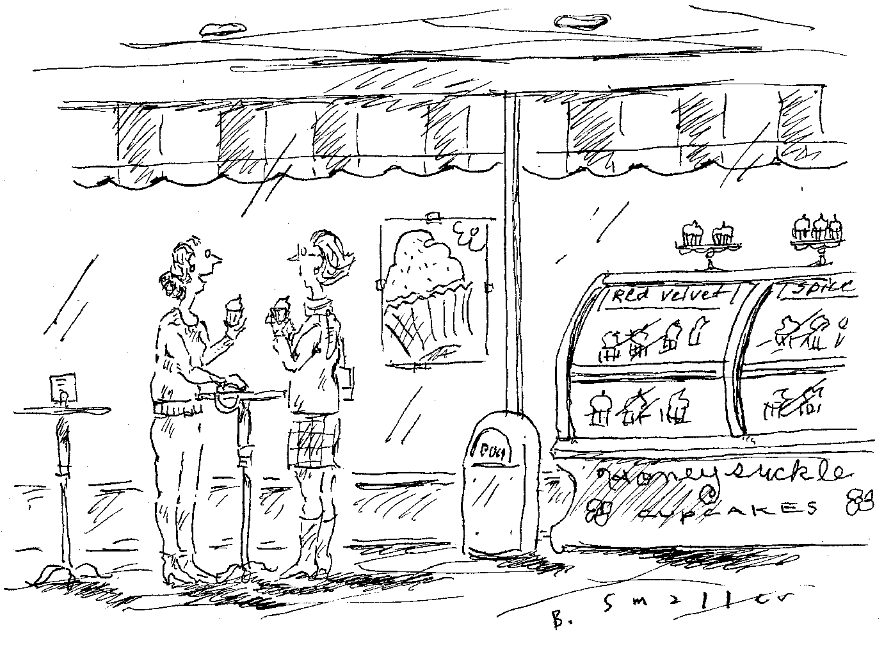
In the first show, the fragmented and mummified body of Tutankhamun was placed inside a CAT scanner, and sculptors were commissioned to make reconstructions of Tutankhamun’s head (revealing that the boy-king less resembles Obama than Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com). “We are in the presence of a king,” Hawass said, on the air. “And that’s why we should look at him with respect.” Another show sought to identify a mummy, taken from the Valley of the Kings, as Queen Hatshepsut. (“We are under the mountain now, can you imagine? I think we are almost now four hundred and fifty feet under the ground! It’s very difficult to breathe. I can feel there’s no oxygen.”)

A new, two-part film, “King Tut Unwrapped,” was shot during the past two years. “The Hatshepsut show was cool, but this will be huge!” Quilici said in Hawass’s office; he has an easy, amused manner. He promised DNA-derived discoveries about relatives of Tutankhamun, news about Tutankhamun’s early death, and the innovation of a camera fixed to Hawass’s trademark hat. Quilici had been worried that Hawass would not approve, until Abigail Harper, his co-producer, had an idea: “If we call it the Zahicam, he will love it.”

Asked to explain the enduringly strong television market for ancient-Egyptian material, Quilici said that it was powered by the strangeness of mummies, by dreams of adventure, and (in so many words) by a dependable schedule of domestic flights. Although one could hope to make similar films about other cultures, “here it’s accessible. The Valley of the Kings is there, the mummies are there. It’s a new frontier, but at the same time it’s a very accessible frontier.” I later spoke to Terry Garcia, the executive vice-president for mission programs at the National Geographic Society, who acknowledged that he has heard from plaintive archeologists in other fields, who “sometimes point out the fact that perhaps the world is a little too fascinated by Egyptian archeology, to the exclusion of other civilizations.”

To the discomfort of some Egyptologists, Hawass is more than a participant in Quilici’s breathless shows; he is a collaborator, in a way that allows the space between the discipline of Egyptology and its popularization to shrink almost to nothing. Though Quilici’s films may appear to report on projects set in motion by Egyptians, they are largely initiatives pitched to the S.C.A. Quilici told me that he presents ideas to Hawass, and “if he likes it he does it.” The National Geographic Society arranged for the scanner to come to Cairo, and Quilici, with the Discovery Channel, set up, and paid for, the DNA laboratory. (Hawass had previously been dismissive about the idea of DNA work on mummies.) Hawass’s brusque manner does not make him a natural television personality, but he has the keys to the country, and has no objection to seeing himself—an Egyptian politician with a formidable management style—reflected in the Western media as Indiana Jones. He makes an astute trade: access for attention. He can make the red tape fall away, and, in return, television tells a story of Egyptian Egyptology. Quilici said of Hawass, “Once he’s excited, there are no barriers,” adding, “When you work with big archeologists, they are always concerned what their colleagues will say: Will we do it right? Should we dig here? Maybe we won’t find anything. Zahi is not scared. He *goes*. He has this incredible energy, and an amazing gut feeling.”

Hawass’s dynamism is impressive, yet one can imagine how galling this sketch might sound to another archeologist. On the air, Hawass looks likes an Egyptologist of childhood imagination: he can follow any whim, and enter any tomb, without a thought of permissions, grant proposals, or tenure. Modern archeologists take enormous care, with latex gloves and measuring devices, to invest a somewhat haphazard activity with the trappings of science. Ideally, their satisfaction derives from uncovering information, not



“He’s very stable—he has a land line.”

treasure troves. Hawass, as seen on TV, appears to be from another era. A young European academic told me that some Egyptologists watch Hawass with disapproval mixed "with a little bit of jealousy: we'd all like to don the big hat and go breaking into tombs." The modern way can be "a little too precious," she said. Howard Carter, the discoverer of Tutankhamun, struck a similarly wistful note in 1923, when he contemplated the kind of work that had been done a hundred years before him. "Those were the great days of excavating," he wrote. "Anything to which a fancy was taken, from a scarab to an obelisk, was just appropriated, and if there was a difference of opinion with a brother excavator one laid for him with a gun."

After the Hatshepsut film first aired, in 2007, Hawass was criticized for identifying the Queen's mummy on television before making his evidence available in a scholarly way. The relevant DNA work has just been submitted to a journal, Hawass told me. (Hawass's writing, when not for a mass audience, tends to appear in Festschrifts that are not peer-reviewed.) When I saw Hawass in Cairo, he was determined to avoid having the same criticisms levelled at "King Tut Unwrapped," and wanted to make sure that a paper was published before its first broadcast. The film was nearly finished, and, according to Quilici, the Discovery Channel was eager to show it right away, and to start seeing a return on its investment. But a DNA expert, one of many co-authors of an accompanying scientific paper, had asked for extra weeks to write up his contribution of a few paragraphs, and he could not be hurried. The film would have to wait.

Despite this complication, which Hawass and Quilici had been discussing, Hawass was in a playful mood as he changed for the TV studio. "Everybody close his eyes!" he cried out when, still without his trousers, he had to fetch something from the English-speaking office. (At this moment, one could understand why Andres Numhauser, an exhibitions executive who works with Hawass on the "Tutankhamun" shows, had described Hawass as someone "who seems to have a very strong personality but is a sweet man.") Before Hawass left his office—to be driven through rush-hour traffic, with his driver using a police siren—he asked Quilici for advice. Should he agree to speak publicly about Pharaonic-era references to wine drinking, in order to help support the Egyptian wine industry? A wine manufacturer had made the request.

"Yes," Quilici said. "I think it's nice."

"I should charge them?"

"Of course, Zahi."

A pause. "I need an agent. I am shy."

Hawass's tendency toward self-flattery obscures his past; when, reluctantly, he talks of his upbringing, his words have the texture of a Soviet-era account of Stalin's boyhood. We know that he was born in 1947, five years before Nasser's revolution, in a village near the city of Damietta, in the north of Egypt. Beyond that: "I was a famous soccer player, and the people loved me. . . . When I was young, I used to make plays, theatre, cultural activities in my village. And I was like the leader of the kids, they followed me. In everything." Moreover, "All the ladies in the village, they were in love with me and wanted to marry me."

Hawass went on, "I'm not the son of a minister or an important man. And I don't think that anyone in Egypt like me, from an ordinary family, has become a public figure." (This seemed to overlook Presidents Nasser and Sadat, among others.) His father—"a good man, proud of himself"—was a farmer, who died when Zahi was thirteen, leaving his mother with six children. Zahi was the oldest son. Asked about the impact of this on him, Hawass said, "None at all." At sixteen, he went to college in Alexandria, to study archeology of the Greco-Roman period. He graduated after four years, at a moment of national trauma: Egypt's defeat by Israel in the Six-Day War, in 1967. "I was so sad," he said. "We lost the war because of corruption!" (Hawass, in later life, has spoken harshly of Israel; earlier this year, after the invasion of Gaza, he wrote, in Arabic, "The only things that the Israelis have learned from history are methods of tyranny and torture.") Hawass said that although he was not obliged to do military service—as an oldest son, he was exempt, he said—he decided to serve all the same. But when he presented himself to the authorities in Alexandria "a stupid man treated me badly, insulted me, without any reason, and I thought, This is not an army, and I left."

In 1968, Hawass was hired by the Department of Antiquities, the forerunner of the S.C.A., to be an inspector—a government official attached to an archeological dig or an ancient site. This was a job for life: a dependable, if lowly, spot in the giant public-sector bureaucracy that had emerged since the revolution. Posted at different sites across Egypt, Hawass was resentful of the desert, scornful of his superiors, underpaid, and—on the evidence of one photograph of a spectacular checked sports coat—overdressed. According to David Sims, an American expatriate in Cairo, who met Hawass in the late sixties and became his friend, "He certainly wasn't that good a student, and I don't think at the time he was starry-eyed about the Pharaohs." In Cairo, he sometimes stayed with Sims, who recalled, laughing, "Most Egyptian men are ladies' men, but they're terrible at it. Zahi's one of the successful ones."

In time, Hawass was promoted, and he began to find the work more tolerable, particularly after 1974, when he moved to Giza and was given an office in a group of buildings overlooked by the Great Pyramid. Fadel Gad, a close friend who also worked in the Antiquities Department, said recently, "The Pyramids *made* Zahi, I must say that. Zahi found a window of opportunity to look on the world and the world to see him. Anyone who comes to the Pyramids sees Zahi."

Gad recalled accompanying him to a Grateful Dead concert in front of the Sphinx, in the late seventies. Gad found the experience astonishing. "I felt like all the United States of America was there," he said. "And everybody was smoking dope, everybody's getting high, girls are on the guys' shoulders. I was culture-shocked, in my own country." Did Hawass disapprove? "He didn't disapprove! We were enjoying it. We were young, you know, and all this testosterone, and the girls were, of course, fun. We were going crazy, too." Hawass did not recall going with Gad. He said that he attended the concert alone, for work reasons, and in a 2001 column he shuddered at the memory: "Young people standing, shouting, screaming, drinking beer, and I even saw some foreigners smoking."

Hawass was by now married to a woman from his home village. (He and his wife, Fekhira, a gynecologist, have two adult sons.) At the time, Hawass told me, "I was doing good work, but I was not well educated. I didn't know anything. I was a stupid asshole." He took a one-year postgraduate course in Egyptology at Cairo University. Gad recalled that, upon finishing, Hawass considered a career as a tour guide—at a salary far higher than the one he received from the Antiquities Department; instead, he won a Fulbright grant, and a place in the Ph.D. program at the University of Pennsylvania. He started in 1980, and was an "outstanding" student, according to his thesis supervisor, David O'Connor, a senior Egyptologist who still digs in Egypt, and is now a professor at N.Y.U.'s Institute of Fine Arts. Hawass was in Philadelphia for seven years, returning to Egypt at the age of forty. "I came back here as a solid scholar," Hawass said. His fondness for the United States survives, despite the occasional political inconvenience of that position and the risks to his dignity posed by the Homeland Security process. ("They put me in this room with Mexicans!" he told me.) Hawass vacations in Los Angeles, loves expensive California wine, and recently saw "Jersey Boys" on Broadway. He talked with gentleness about the Metropolitan Museum—not its collection but his pleasure in sitting alone on the front steps on a Sunday morning, watching people come and go.

By his return to Egypt, in 1987, the Department of Antiquities had been renamed the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. (It became the S.C.A. a few years later.) Hawass was appointed director of the section whose sites included Giza. He was now in charge of the Pyramids, and gave himself responsibility for "changing the plateau from a zoo to an open park." His zeal in this effort—he erected fences and shooed away tourist-trade camels—made him an enemy of local residents; some of them, he believed, said prayers against him. Hawass has written that his Giza strategy became "a standard for UNESCO," which is an overstatement. Indeed, some S.C.A.-sanctioned work during his term has been condemned for its aggressive attempt to strip sites of their later history, turning them into islands of antique purity, easily legible to tourists.

As an archeologist, Hawass "knows a *lot* about the Giza plateau," Salima Ikram told me. "At the Pyramids, Zahi really did do some fabulous work." Along with digs that Hawass has run at Saqqara, a little farther south, and in the Valley of the Golden Mummies, in the western desert, the work at Giza is his greatest archeological achievement. In particular, excavations led by Hawass and Mark Lehner, an American Egyptologist and a friend, revealed much about the lives of the builders of the pyramids: their bakeries, workshops, and tombs. In 1990, a cemetery containing the tombs of hundreds of pyramid builders began to be uncovered; Hawass has called the find "as important as the tomb of King Tut."

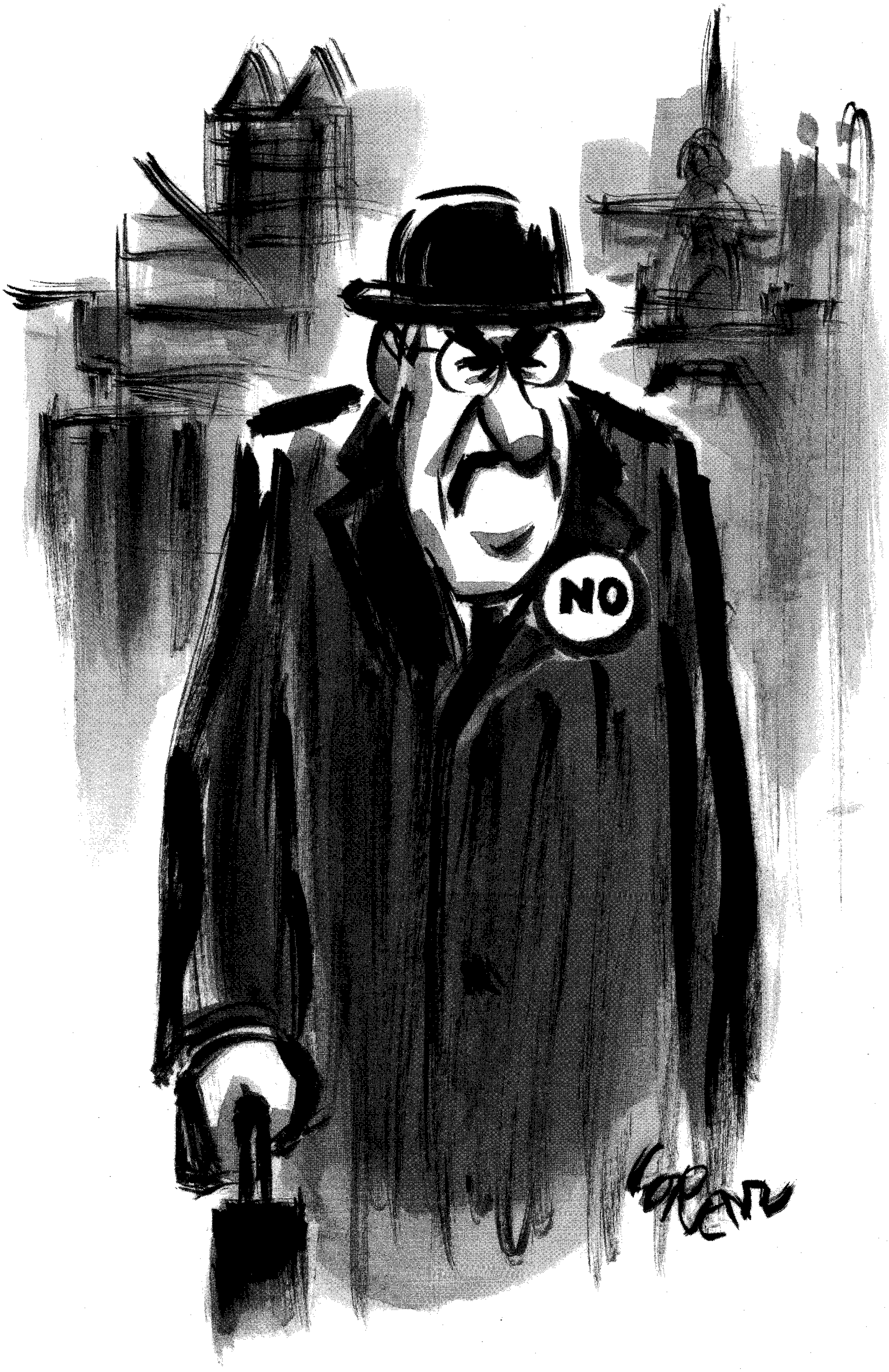
When we spoke, Hawass referred to Giza as "a place near my heart." Asked to recall a moment that touched him on the plateau, he mentioned an excavation in 1990, when he opened the tomb of a dwarf named Perniankhu and found a basalt statue that he regards as a masterpiece of the period. The figure is seated, the body a little lopsided, and hieroglyphic text reads, "The one who delights his lord every day, the King's Dwarf, Perniankhu of the Great Palace." When Hawass took the statue in his hands, he told me, "it was one of the most beautiful moments in my life, as if I were holding my first son." This moment occurred during a press conference: journalists had been invited to watch the opening of the chamber.

At Giza, the new glimpse of an ancient workforce aided Hawass in another project, which was rhetorical. In the years leading up to the millennium, there was a spike in profitable pseudoscience about Giza. Alternative theorists argued that the area showed evidence of a civilization far older than that of ancient Egypt, one with roots elsewhere on the planet, or on some other planet. In 1993, "The Mystery of the Sphinx," an NBC show generous to such thoughts, had an audience of twenty million. Hawass didn't turn away from the trend. He kept a library of relevant books in his office, and rarely gave an interview in English without some scathing references to "pyramidiots"—along with reinforcement of the idea that the Pyramids were monuments of national cohesion, built with Egyptian sweat and blood. In return, he was accused by antagonists of having a role in various dark conspiracies, and rumored to have access to the Great Pyramid from a secret tunnel leading from his bathroom. As David Sims, his American friend in Cairo, recalled, this was how Hawass established himself internationally—"by becoming a spokesman for rationality, put up against the crazies. . . . And he quickly found out he had a charismatic personality."

In time, according to Hawass, visitors to Giza "came not to see the Pyramids but first to see me." Amr Badr, an Egyptian businessman close to Hawass, compared his friend's strategy to the way King Fahd of Saudi Arabia took the title of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in the nineteen-eighties. "Zahi became the Custodian of the Pyramids," he said. "It was *very* smart branding."

In the disagreements between Hawass and the alternative theorists, there were doubtless some strands of heartfelt argument on both sides. But it's hard not to think of the debate as primarily taking the form of professional wrestling—especially when one recalls that Hawass was willing to contribute to "The Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Mystery," a discussion between him and key supporters of the unorthodox position, held on an Alaskan cruise ship in the late nineties. His opponents sold their books, while Hawass, his profile raised, was able to lure tourists to Egypt—a particularly urgent need after the 1997 Islamist terrorist attack at Hatshepsut's temple, which killed sixty-four people. Hawass—in whom there seems to be a perfect alignment of national and personal ambitions—has never felt sufficiently antagonized by the unscientific approach to want to give up the language of spooky Egypt: he'll say that a Sphinx "talks" to him, or bemoan a "curse" on his CAT scanner. He has never hindered the representation of ancient Egypt as a place midway between history and dream. When he promoted the millennial celebrations at the Pyramids—which had as their daunting centerpiece a twelve-hour Jean-Michel Jarre opera—Hawass was happy to hint at the supernatural: "Who knows? It could be that something incredible will happen here."

One morning, Hawass was driven to Saqqara, twenty miles southwest of Giza. On a creaking, hand-winched rope, he was lowered—standing upright, with one foot in a bucket—forty feet down a shaft into a recently discovered tomb where some mummies were still in place. The bucket came back up for me. "Two sealed coffins made of wood and


NO
LORENZ

one limestone sarcophagus completely intact since antiquity," Hawass said when I joined him, sounding a little like an auctioneer. He explained that these were twenty-five-hundred-year-old bodies in a shaft from a much earlier period. He showed me a mummified dog.

Returning to the surface, we walked with a phalanx of S.C.A. employees up to the Step Pyramid—the prototype built a century or two before its larger neighbors at Giza. Leaving behind the crowd, and the heat, we went inside. A low passageway, closed to the public, led toward the pyramid's center. Hawass moved nimbly, in a kind of crouching trot, saying, "The restoration of the Step Pyramid is one of the most important projects that ever happened in my life. Everyone was frightened to do anything with it, and it was falling apart." Speaking more generally, he went on, "You need to be dedicated, you need to sit under the sun, you need to suffer. Those people"—the men who had surrounded his S.U.V. the moment it stopped—"some of them are not ready to suffer." The corridor ended after a hundred feet or so, at a point partway up one side of a tall, wide shaft that an S.C.A. team had recently cleared of debris. The space rose above us and fell away below us. "I think what I did is too much for people in Egypt," Hawass said. "I don't think that people can stand all this change. They could not understand it—they think I am too powerful. I am not too powerful—I do not want to be too powerful. I want to do something for my country. I did many things for myself, *through* what I did for my country."

FIREFLIES

You see them everywhere and hardly notice the one
cranking past as you pass on the sidewalk,
that mewling, watery eye, partly bloodshot, partly
focussed on you, or some apprehension of you,
or, shrunken, one in the Giant self-checkout line,
foul as a just risen pig, in slippers, and now
the puzzled, warty face turns to you, and you're
helpless, stunned, the routine ordinary signals are
suddenly hieroglyphics, you're punching out
answers, your life savings gone, and a bug's winking.

Better, unquestionably, to walk faster, left on Main,
take the boiling sun on your back, still broad
enough to hold whatever comes next today.
That's the trick of it all, knowing you can,
without thinking, navigate, slide, cut quick
the way kids on front yards do in that smell
of mowed grass, sweat, youth, not dusk yet,
a tumbling brush of bone and skin only sweet
proof of no intent, intersection and angle, the right
desire of things as subtle as what fireflies mean.

Once my wife and I, following the girlish Realtor,
opened a parlor door, brownstone dim, cool, two
bodies in pajamas pushing up in a musky bed
no one supposed to be there, husband and wife,
I've thought all these years. Their throats opened,
calls horrific as ungreased gears, dry pistons, us
already heeling out. Did someone later come,
explain who we were, snafus, that unlocked door?
Or did they lie, walls creaking, until dawn, bugs
at windows like words in their mouths, on and off?

—*Dave Smith*

Before returning to Cairo, we stopped at the site's new visitor center. Hawass is well travelled, observant, and patriotic, and this leads to a punishing, Naipaulian kind of self-consciousness, in which he allows himself to see his country as a critical foreigner might. I saw his frustration with the inexpert Egyptian waiters at a showy Japanese restaurant on a riverboat in Cairo—a place where Hawass's order is, simply, "The Zahi menu!" Later, in Alexandria—where Hawass joined the regional governor at a series of openings and inspections, moving from place to place in what became a frantic, horn-honking convoy of ten cars—we visited the Royal Jewelry Museum, undergoing a gorgeous renovation. It's an early-twentieth-century mock-European villa with golden ceilings, naked nymphs on the bathroom walls, and windows of painted glass, showing scenes of wigged and bustled lovers. Here Hawass lost his temper over the ugliness of new leather chairs furnishing a small room set aside for future visiting V.I.P.s.

Now, at Saqqara's visitor center, Hawass berated a shy young woman staff member for failing to monitor the lights properly in a room where an introductory film was about to be shown. (It featured awed, sonorous commentary from Omar Sharif.) Hawass then berated the director of the center, too. "I insulted him," Hawass explained when we sat down briefly in a courtyard and drank cups of coffee. "I said, 'Why didn't you teach this lady what she should do! You have to, or I will move you.' That's what I said." He stood up. "*Yalla.* Let's go." We began to walk out, but he stopped to use the just finished bathroom. I was waiting in the courtyard when I heard him call for me, and I followed him in. "This is beautiful, isn't it?" he asked.

Hawass became secretary-general of the S.C.A. in January, 2002. (Though he moved into the agency's headquarters, in Cairo, he kept his old office at the Pyramids.) He now had responsibility not only for Egypt's ancient past but for its Islamic, Coptic, and Jewish heritage, too. His friend David Sims said that when Hawass took the job "myself and others—we were worried. A lot of pressure, and serious stress, and he had this heart problem." Hawass had a heart attack in the early nineties. "One would have thought he'd have blown a fuse, but evidently he's fine. He stopped smoking, except for *sheeshas*. He seems to have thrived with the pressure and all the visibility—and he works hard." Egypt is believed to have some six million government employees not in uniform. Sims described many of the thirty thousand people who work below Hawass as "crusty, Nasserist-period people who spend their time clinging to jobs." He explained, "Under the surface, there are a lot of things he has to put up with and do that most people don't see, and hats off to him."

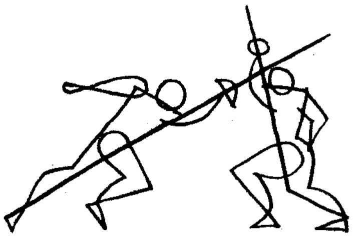
One day, Hawass said to me, "To control all this, you have to make them fear you and make them love you at the same time." Hawass's strongest skills are perhaps managerial, or proprietorial: he's in the business of striking fear and making deals and squeezing advantage out of Egypt's monopoly on Egyptian soil. I joined him one morning at his gym, in the Sheraton Hotel, where he lifted weights while shouting, "To lead, you have to be strong!"

Terry Garcia, the National Geographic Society executive, who has worked with Hawass on both television programs and the "Tutankhamun" exhibition, told me, "He is a very tough negotiator. He knows what he wants. He is extraordinarily bright and perceptive—that means you'd better know what you're doing when you go in, and you'd better know how you're going to get it, because he does. He tells you up front and throughout the process that his objective is to do whatever is in the best interests of Egypt." I asked Garcia about a stunningly anticlimactic live broadcast in 2002, shown on the National Geographic Channel, in which a robot was sent into a shaft in the Great Pyramid. The machine drilled through a blocking stone, or door, only to reveal another stone beyond. "What we have seen tonight is totally unique within the world of Egyptology," Hawass said on the air. "The presence of a second door only deepens the intrigue." Garcia said of the show, "It seemed like a great idea." But, given the expense and the complications, "it's safe to say we'll be very careful about live events in the future."

In 2005, Hawass accepted a proposal from A.E.G., the sports-arena owner and events organizer, to take Tutankhamun back on the road, with an explicit ambition of making money. Andres Numhauser, the exhibitions executive, works for Arts and Exhibitions International, an A.E.G. subsidiary, and he told me that Hawass had "professionalized exhibitions," adding, "Egyptians don't appreciate what he's doing." A.E.G. agreed to pay Egypt for access to a few dozen of its thousands of Tutankhamun artifacts, and to involve the National Geographic Society, whose name would go on the poster. Any museum that took the show would be given a share of the ticket proceeds, but it would have to stomach the loss of almost all curatorial control. In San Francisco, for example, the de Young Museum was able to veto items in the exhibition's accompanying gift store, and it ruled out a tissue box whose papers exit through the nose in a Pharaoh's mask. Beyond that, the museum was the provider of floor space. John Norman, the C.E.O. of Arts and Exhibitions International, said, "We lay it out, we bring all the elements—the cases, the text panels, the lighting, everything is ours. Where they have input is in the label copy. Their curator might want to say the same thing that's on that label but in a different way, and we give them the opportunity to edit. And there might be a two-per-cent change."

When I met Hawass in San Francisco in June, he dined with, among others, Norman and Numhauser, and Sameh Shoukry, Egypt's Ambassador to the United States. He ordered three-hundred-dollar bottles of wine and took a commanding pleasure in his role. Drawing laughs by parodying his savage negotiating style, he gave advice on a "Tutankhamun"-related dispute: "Don't discuss it! It's done. I will cut off his head."

Hawass's chutzpah has doubtless made Egypt money and buttressed tourism. He has encouraged the careers of young Egyptian archeologists, and may even have made a dent in Egyptian popular indifference toward the country's ancient heritage. (He's well enough known to be imitated by TV comedians.) He has declared a moratorium on new excavations in all but the damper Delta region of northern Egypt, where conditions make it more likely that ancient objects might decay in the ground; the decision has generally been supported by Egyptologists. And dozens of foreign teams continue to work in the country, on existing projects or on new digs in the north. (Hawass says that some foreign archeologists are "assholes," but concedes that others have done "good work for Egypt.")



Hawass has also championed the idea that some key Egyptian artifacts in foreign collections should be repatriated, including the Rosetta stone, long displayed in the British Museum, and the bust of Nefertiti now in the Neues Museum, in Berlin. (Dietrich Wildung, the former director of the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, also in Berlin, where the bust was held until a few weeks ago, has been fiercely attacked by Hawass in the past. He sighed when, recently, he was asked about the bust: "I like Zahi very much, and I appreciate, really, what he has done for the consciousness of the Egyptian people concerning their national past.") In October, Hawass secured the return, from the Louvre, of five wall-painting fragments stolen from an area near the Valley of the Kings in the nineteen-eighties.

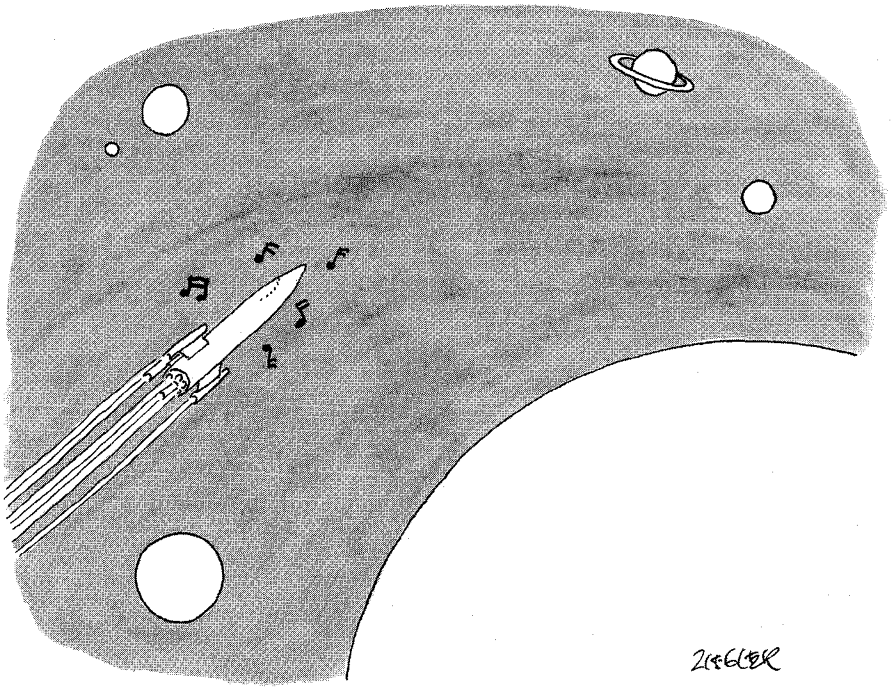
Hawass describes himself as "decisive," in a culture "where people are afraid to make decisions." Mohamed al-Fatah, one of Hawass's senior executives, said to me, "It's a revolution—Dr. Zahi's revolution." The flip side is bluster, shaded with a quality that seems unlikely to be rewarded in archeology: impatience. Egyptology has as its international spokesman someone for whom all discourse tends toward propaganda. I was with Hawass in San Francisco when he ran into an American financial supporter, a woman with an air of late-period Katharine Hepburn. ("See, I have my cartouche on today," she told Hawass. "I couldn't find Nefertiti. It must be on the ship. I live on a ship part time.") He introduced me to her, adding, "She's a rich lady," then asked her for a million dollars. The donation would support a Zahi Hawass chair at the American University in Cairo, he said, but—in a curious back-and-forth—he seemed unable to explain how the fund differed from an educational foundation to which she had already contributed. He said that it was the same fund. But wasn't that to support a prize for exceptional students? "It's tax-deductible," Hawass replied.

His attention was on the pitch, not on the product. Hawass's conversational ambition always seems to be submission rather than engagement. Seen, inflamed and agitated, beside a five-thousand-year-old monument, he can appear to be enacting a proverb about the follies of a choleric life. And when he speaks of ancient Egypt he often appears so determined to signpost excitement—"the most important site in the world"; "the most amazing thing I did in my life"—that real excitement is hard to detect. You watch a man who is thinking only about being watched. In Hawass's hands, "something becomes the world's most wonderful mummy even though there are twenty thousand like it," Salima Ikram said, adding, "If everything's equally marvellous, then what's truly marvellous and what's not?"

And Hawass is a frustratingly unreliable source of information. When Joann Fletcher, the once banished British archeologist, identified a mummy as Nefertiti, Hawass's response was to identify the same mummy as a teen-age girl—too young to have been the Queen—and then say that it was more likely to be male, and then deny that he had ever said it was female. (Hawass now denies that he ever said that it could be male.) Hawass will vastly exaggerate the number of replica Zahi Hawass hats that have sold for charity. Or he'll claim, implausibly, that he is aware of nobody in Egypt who feels religious discomfort about the country's pre-Islamic heritage. He told me that when he showed Obama around the Pyramids he grew to have a better understanding of him than all but the President's closest confidants. "We became friends from the first minute," he said. "I told him George Lucas came here to find out how my hat became more famous than Harrison Ford's."

Hawass's driver picks him up each morning in his apartment in central Cairo and takes him to the gym and then to the office, where he works without pause, apparently sustained by no more than a can of Diet 7UP, brought to him on a saucer in the early afternoon. In the evenings, he eats with friends, such as Omar Sharif. ("He speaks a lot about women," Sharif told me. "I don't very much because I'm getting older and older.") At exactly ten o'clock, even if someone is in mid-sentence, Hawass brings dinner to a close and then visits a café close to home, where, for an hour or so, he plays backgammon or watches soccer on TV. He works through the weekend.

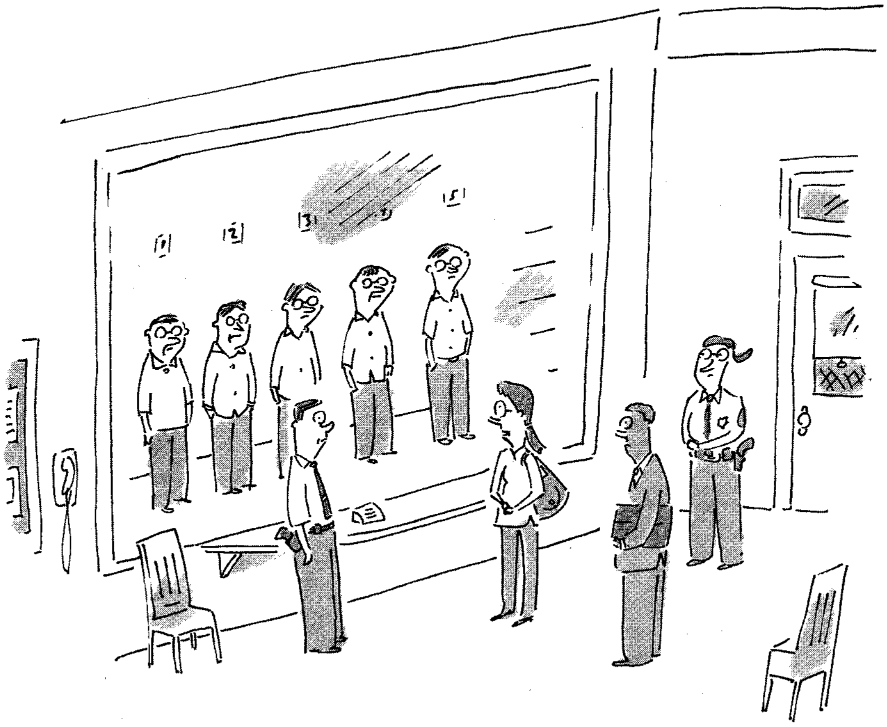
At the end of October, Hawass was appointed Vice-Minister of Culture, with control of the S.C.A. Prior to this promotion, Hawass, as a civil servant, had been facing mandatory retirement next spring. He now serves at the President's pleasure, and will be able to follow a desire to attach his name—and Egypt's—to one spectacular, Tutankhamun-level discovery before his career is over. If he is to have that glory, then it seems likely that it will derive from one of two places. Officially, Hawass leads the team exploring the temple of Taposiris Magna, thirty miles west of Alexandria, where Kathleen Martinez expects to find Cleopatra. (He visits when he can—as I was able to observe, he can reach Alexandria, a hundred and forty miles away from Cairo, in little more than an hour.)



"A trillion bottles of beer on the wall, a trillion bottles of beer . . . "

I met Martinez in Cairo. She was wearing dark eye makeup that made reference to Cleopatra. Martinez was previously a successful criminal-defense attorney; she had no formal training in archeology when she arrived in Cairo, in 2005. But she had made an intensive private study of Cleopatra and—apparently thanks to some combination of sharp reasoning, verve, and personal wealth—she persuaded Hawass of the strength of a theory that the Queen and Mark Antony were buried at Taposiris Magna, and not at a site now underwater, as others have guessed. The S.C.A. provided a team of Egyptian archeologists and workers, at times a hundred strong; Martinez has paid for some aspects of the work. "He told me that if there's only a one-per-cent chance that you can find the tomb of the last queen, we should do it," she said. Martinez was grateful for Hawass's support, but acknowledged that "he put a lot of pressure on me. He asks all the time. When he comes to the site, we have to have something *important* for him."

I later discovered that the press had been misled, at least once, at Taposiris Magna. In April, Hawass spoke to journalists at the temple, and showed them a number of objects that he said had been recently discovered there, including a gray granite life-size fragment of a face, tentatively identified as an image of Mark Antony. Hawass was photographed holding the piece, and its discovery was included in stories published around the world—by *Time*, the Associated Press, *National Geographic*, and others. A Hawass press release explicitly claimed that



"It's so hard to choose just one—can't I pick two?"

the fragment had been found by the Dominican-Egyptian expedition. So did a newspaper column by Hawass. The claim was false: the face fragment had been found long before Martinez ever reached Taposiris Magna. A Hungarian archeological team worked at the site from 1998 to 2004, and found the fragment in October, 2000. It was described and photographed in two reports published by the team, in 2001 and 2004. In order for the fragment to have been presented as a new discovery at Hawass's press conference, it must have been removed from its place in the collection of the Greco-Roman Museum, in Alexandria, which is currently closed for renovation. When asked about this, Hawass called it a mixup—"an honest mistake."

Hawass's other, greater hope is to find a new royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings, across the Nile from the city of Luxor, about three hundred and fifty miles south of Cairo. This is where Carter found Tutankhamun. "It really is the dream of his life," Brando Quilici told me. Known tombs in the Valley are numbered from KV1 to KV63. "I'm hoping to end my career by making the discovery of the tomb of KV64," Hawass noted in a speech at the de Young Museum.

Before leaving Egypt, I visited Luxor and neighboring sites. I was met at the airport by Mostafa Waziry, a senior S.C.A. officer whose wife, he said, complains that he has started to talk like Hawass. "He's a diehard man!" Waziry shouted affably. "Is Dr. Hawass working seven days a week? Of course not! He's working twelve days a week! I work seven days a week. He's working twenty days a week!"

We drove around in rising heat, and Waziry overwhelmed me with marvels of ancient Egypt, including the Temple of Hatshepsut and—after a phone call from Hawass, and some nuclear-code-ish synchronization of keys—the startlingly lovely wall paintings in the Tomb of Nefertari, which are now closed to the public. But, as Waziry pointed out various S.C.A. initiatives of recent years, I began to realize how much of this work had been included in a scathing UNESCO report last year, which decided that S.C.A.-sanctioned activity posed "a real threat to the authenticity and integrity" of the area, which is a World Heritage site. Hawass had told me that Luxor is "where people should come to learn how they can manage a site," but UNESCO disagrees. For example, the unearthing of the "Avenue of the Sphinxes," now under way in the center of the city, has required the demolition of buildings that UNESCO regarded as integral. The process also risks cutting the town in two and exposing the monuments to decay, the report claimed. On the other side of the Nile, on the approach to the Valley of the Kings, the village of Gurnah has been largely demolished; UNESCO described Gurnah as "part of the archeological landscape ever since investigations in the West Bank began" and "an inseparable part of the values of the property." As we drove by the now bare hillside, Waziry said that the village's former inhabitants had been "very happy" to be relocated. He also observed that two recently explored tombs, where the village used to stand, had been designated Z1 and Z2—after Zahi Hawass. An Egyptologist familiar with the area told me that he was "horrified" by the speed and scale of the work done at Gurnah. (Hawass recently defended the project and noted that twenty-five of the village's three hundred homes had been marked for conservation.)

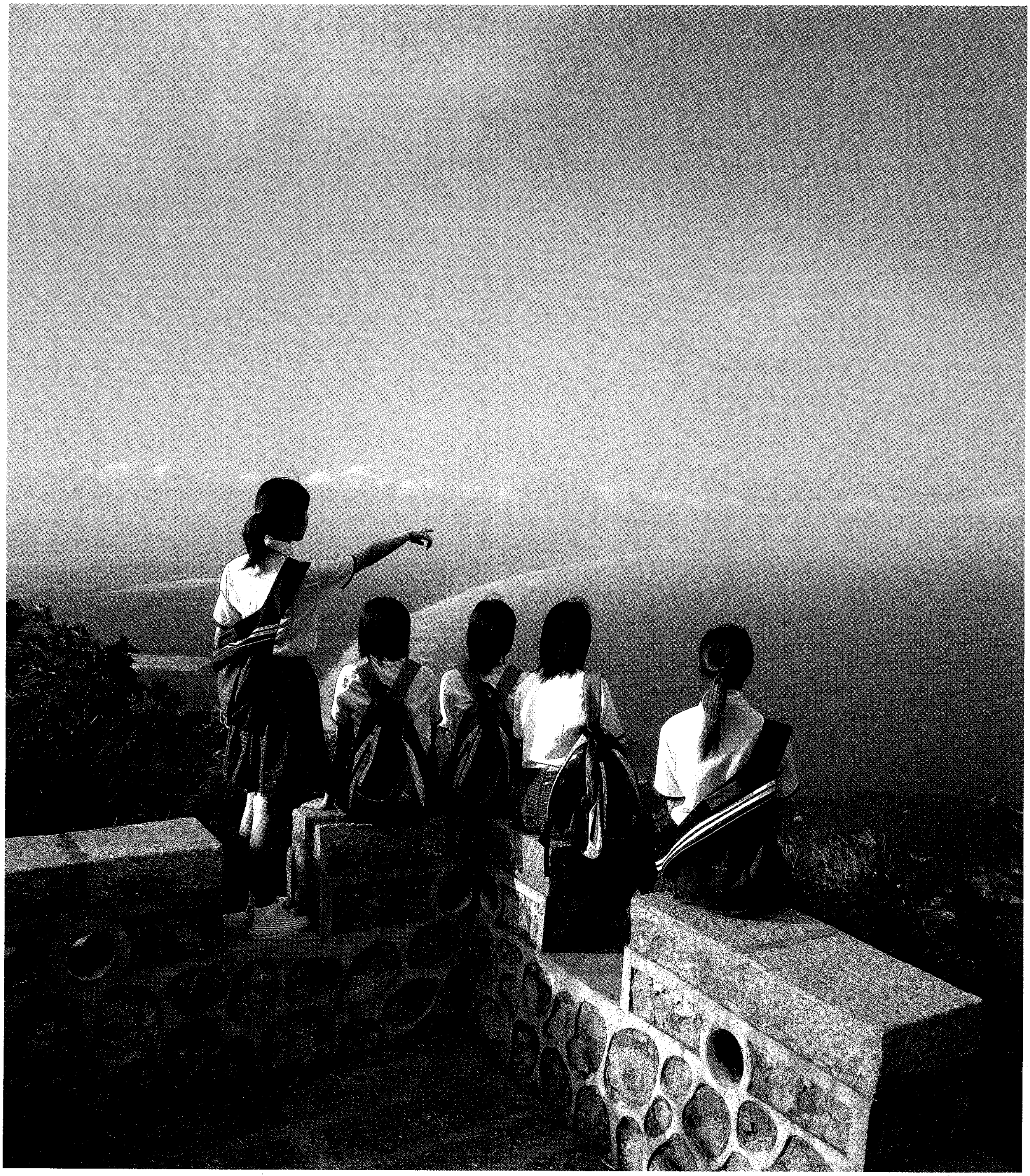
In the Valley of the Kings, Waziry walked me across a new parking lot—"room for two hundred buses at one time," he said—then past visitors from Europe and Asia. We stepped over a rope and left the public path to clamber up a deep gully that until recently did not exist. Salima Ikram, in Cairo, had explained to me that, until a year and a half ago, when the search for a new tomb began, the area looked very different. "They've gone down to bedrock, everywhere, to the valley floor." The Egyptologist familiar with the area, referring to this work, said, with feeling, "Archeology is *not* a treasure hunt."

It was midsummer, and work had stopped for the season, but the original level of loose rock was suggested by a small piece of modern graffiti, far above head height: Hawass had signed his name. We walked back, past the entrance to the tomb of Tutankhamun—KV62—where his mummy, now separated from its golden funeral mask, lies unadorned in a clear, climate-controlled box, a sheet pulled up to its neck. For my benefit, Waziry did an impression of a woman who, not long ago, on seeing Zahi Hawass at this spot, is said to have fainted with excitement. ♦

FICTION

ALONE

BY YIYUN LI



When the waitress came to take the order, she asked how Suchen was doing with the smoke. Suchen replied vaguely that all was well with her, though she had no idea what smoke the waitress was talking about. The man sitting at the next table, an elbow away—the patio was barely large enough for the six tables it held, three of them unoccupied—must have been observing the exchange; he leaned over after the waitress had left and explained that up north the wildfire was just a few miles from the state highway.

The October sky was blue, empty but for some still wisps of cloud. The restaurant, Mony's, was the last on the block, and the road running past the patio narrowed into an unpaved footpath that vanished into an open field. Apart from the bushes and the grass, green and unaffected by the season, there was not much between the town and the mountains. Ski lifts idled above aspens, their leaves just beginning to show a tinge of yellow. Suchen could sense no trace of smoke in the air.

An old couple, sitting at a third table on the patio, were also discussing the fire, their voices loud enough to be an invitation, and the man next to Suchen wasted no time chiming in. The couple wore matching polo shirts the pale yellow of newborn chicks, and their hair had faded to a similar sandy shade. They lived two valleys north, the wife explained, where fall was already descending with all its colors, and what a beautiful season it would be if it weren't for this fire. The man eating alone expressed sympathy, and then began musing about fire control: wildfires had existed long before America—or, for that matter, the earth—was claimed by human beings, he said, and there was no point in trying to beat something that was part of nature. The old couple listened, neither agreeing with the man nor withdrawing their smiles, careful not to embarrass a stranger. Suchen looked at the slice of lemon floating among the ice cubes in her glass and blushed, as though the man were her companion. She imagined what the couple would say to each other on their drive home. A husband and wife who behaved so courteously toward the world must have ways of dealing with awkwardness like this—a subtle reference to someone similar they'd encountered, or perhaps just a benign dismissal of the man's opinions. Suchen wondered what it would be like to be understood without having to speak, the comfort of silence without the threat of misunderstanding or estrangement.

Pure greed, Lei had said, shaking his head mockingly when she had told him that this was what she had dreamed of for their marriage. Of course, he was right, Suchen had readily agreed. If a woman did not desire clothes or jewels or children, she'd said, taking up his tone, although she was the target of its mockery, she would harbor some other form of unreasonable greed, no? He did not reply but poured more wine for her, and then for himself. It was the night before his flight back to China. When they spoke again, it was about his trip, the few things he needed to pack in the morning in his carry-on, and what she should do with the clothes and other belongings he was leaving behind. What they had not talked about at their last dinner was that they would be taking the most natural and least hurtful course to becoming strangers: their marriage would no longer be on his conscience when he went with his business associates to the night clubs and karaoke bars of Beijing, where young women blossomed under the dimmed lights, eager to be chosen. In time, he would choose a woman, not one he'd met in a night club but someone more companionable and trustworthy, who would not oppose the idea of having children with him, and whose greed—if she had any—would be easier for him to understand and to satisfy.

The divorce papers had arrived six months later, mailed to the cottage that Suchen had rented, not far from their old house. She had signed them at once and mailed them back. She had wondered what to do with the wedding ring—a thin, unadorned band; when they had married, sixteen years earlier, they had not been able to afford a more lavish one—and in the end she had put it in the plastic folder where she kept her passport and her green card. She had brought the folder with her, in the car trunk.

After the couple left, the man told Suchen that his name was Walter. When the waitress came with Suchen's salad, he asked for a refill of coffee. He appeared to be in his late sixties or early seventies; his hair and beard, both patchily grayed, were bushy. He had on a light-blue shirt, buttoned to the top and wrinkled by sweat—it was a warm day, and there was not much of a breeze on the patio. He was in town from Seattle for an event organized by the alumni association of his alma mater, he said; he and his wife had been invited as the top donors from their region.

Suchen stabbed at a slice of pear and wondered if there was a death or a divorce she would learn about. But what difference did it make? A change of circumstance had led the man to eat alone at a ski resort before the first snowfall. Outside the town, there were trails to hike and rivers to fish, but those activities were for people with companions, or for those with solitary souls. It was loneliness that had led him to seek a conversation on a restaurant patio long past the lunch hour, as it was loneliness that had made her empty the refrigerator in the cottage and pack her belongings into five mega-sized black plastic garbage bags and drop them outside a Goodwill early one morning. Suchen had left a check in the cottage to cover an extra month's rent and a note apologizing for breaking the lease. The landlady, who lived next door, was a widow in her seventies. On holidays, her children and grandchildren would visit her, their cars crowding the driveway and spilling onto the street, the lights in the house burning late into the night. Suchen wondered what the landlady would tell her children about the runaway tenant at the next Thanksgiving dinner—or perhaps the incident would have been forgotten by then, and an ad would already have brought a replacement for Suchen.

Walter asked Suchen where she was from. Los Angeles, she said, although she knew he'd meant where she was from originally. China was not an answer Suchen gave people these days; there was no point in making unnecessary connections to strangers, in discovering whose neighbors, friends, or acquaintances had travelled to her country. The last time she had been there was for her mother's funeral, eight years ago, and before that, two years earlier, for her father's. She had not kept in touch with her siblings—a brother and a sister, both younger than she—whose attitude toward her had gone from intimidation

WENG FEN, "STARING AT THE SEA #6" (2004)

SWANN

Richard Hamilton, *Picasso's Meninas*,
etching, aquatint, roulette and drypoint, 1973.
Estimate $30,000 to $50,000.

AT AUCTION
Nov 20 at 10:30am & 2:30pm
American Art
Contemporary Art
Specialist: Todd Weyman, ext 32
tweyman@swanngalleries.com
Illustrated Catalogue $40 U.S./$50 Elsewhere:
212-254-4710, ext 0.
104 East 25th St • New York, NY 10010
View catalogue and bid online at
www.swanngalleries.com

Canoe Canada's Arctic
Fly-in canoe trips on the remote tundra rivers of North America's last great wilderness. Herds of caribou, muskoxen, white wolves, moose and grizzlies. Warm, arid summers. Wildlife biologist guide. Operating since 1974. Brochure: **CANOE ARCTIC INC.** Box 130, Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0, Canada (867) 872-2308
www.canoearctic.com

100% COTTON
Corduroy Sport Coat
Suede Elbow Patches
All Sizes. Tan and Olive. $225.00
Hunter and Coggins
1-800-343-9396
hunterandcoggins.com

Freudian Slippers
NOW YOU CAN REALLY PUT YOUR FOOT IN IT!
Walk in the master's footsteps! Only $24.95 from the Unemployed Philosophers Guild
Lots of Other Great Stuff!
www.philosophersguild.com 800.255.8371

Museum Quality Judaica
ForgottenJudaica.com | 877 404-1004
Please call for free catalog

THE BURGLARY

They stole my mother's silver,
melting it down, perhaps,

into pure mineral, worth
only its own weight.

We must eat with our hands now,
grab for food

in this new place of greed,
our table set

only with memories, tarnishing
even as we speak:

my mother holding a shining ladle
in her hand,

serving the broth
to children who will forget

to polish her silver, forget even
to lock the house.

While forks and spoons are divided
from all purpose,

patterns are lost like friezes
after centuries of rain,

and every knife is robbed
of its cutting edge.

—*Linda Pastan*

in their youth to indignation as adults.

They must have been given some explanation after the accident, as their parents had insisted on calling it, when Suchen's picture was printed in the county and province newspapers, alongside the pictures of five other girls, hers the only one not framed in black. The pictures had been taken the previous year, when the girls had entered middle school, the standard one-inch black-and-white photos for school registration. Suchen's mother had immediately thrown out any newspapers that had come into their house, though Suchen later read about the incident at the town center, where newspapers were displayed in glass cases. A senseless tragedy, it was called, and she was described as a reticent and prematurely aged survivor. Her report card, which demonstrated neither excellence nor deficiency, was reprinted, a proof, along with her neighbors' comments confirming that her family was a respectable one and she a normal child, that the tragedy had been beyond any adult's ability to foresee. Information about the five other girls was given, too, but in a less detailed manner, as if the dead deserved respect rather than understanding.

Had it happened now, Suchen thought, she would have been sent to a psychologist, but the talk twenty-nine years ago had been whether she should be allowed to return to school or whether other options—a reform school, for instance, or an asylum for the disturbed—were more suitable. In the eyes of her neighbors and her schoolmates, Suchen had seen fear and awe, as if she carried a rare infectious disease, and in the end it was her family's move to another province that had ended the episode. Suchen had always wondered if her siblings remembered their childhood as severed because of her; their parents, after the move, had forbidden them to talk about their old home.

When Suchen asked the waitress for her check, Walter finally picked up his. The waitress gave Suchen a sympathetic look, but did not make any comment.

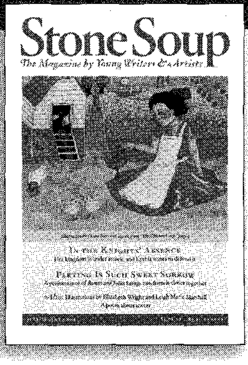
He had been in town for two days, Walter said as he followed Suchen into the street. The waitress's name was Antoinette, he continued, and she was from Boise, one of those kids who would never leave their home state. The manager was the niece of the owner, who lived in Colorado. Come to think of it, Walter added, it was funny that a man would choose to live in a skiing state and open a restaurant at a ski resort in another state.

At the corner, Suchen paused, waiting for Walter to step into the crosswalk first so that she could choose another direction. Walter stopped, too, and pointed at the broad, unmarked street. "See how the streets of the wild Wild West are different from the streets of your Los Angeles. Imagine a hundred, a hundred and fifty years ago: folks drove their horse carriages down this same street, and they were probably too busy to think about us."

Suchen had driven along the Pacific Coast for five days before turning inland. She had originally planned to cross the border into Vancouver, where years ago, on her first trip to North America, she'd spent an eight-hour layover on the way to Austin, Texas. She had looked up the schedules of ferries, and was certain that at this time of year night would have fallen by the time the last ferry left Horseshoe Bay. She was planning to leave her car in the parking lot, along with her suitcase and her legal papers. It would appear to be an accident at first, a woman slipping into the dark sea and never surfacing again. After a while, the police would gather the other pieces of the puzzle, the easy parts, but by then she would be beyond reach, and would not be expected to explain her decision, as had been the case years earlier, when, as the one who had lived, she was made to account not only for her own survival but also for the deaths of the other five girls.

Suchen hung the "Do Not Disturb" tag on her hotel-room door and let herself out onto the balcony, where two chairs and a small table, made to look like solid wood but with less weight, fitted snugly. She imagined a vacationing couple sitting where she was now, a bottle of wine left untouched for as long as the silence lasted. She and Lei could have ended their marriage on a balcony like this—on a mild day during the snow season, their last shared memories the white mountains close by, the ski lifts moving tirelessly and smoothly uphill and downhill, and small colorful dots sliding down the slopes: actions viewed from afar. When they had first come to America, Lei had insisted that they be active in their local Chinese community. Later, when he had secured a position at an investment bank, he had pushed for a more mainstream American life. For years, Suchen had felt as though she were standing at the edge of a beach, holding a line that flew Lei into life like a kite over the sea—or was it the other way around? But even the most trustworthy hand could eventually find it difficult to keep its grip on a taut line. Suchen had continued watching from afar while couples their age began to have children, and when Lei had joined the other overseas Chinese returning to the mother country to make their fortunes she had not accompanied him on his trips. Soon he had begun to spend more time in Beijing, flying back to Los Angeles every other month, out of some sense of duty.

An autumn breeze drove a few leaves across the street. Suchen tried to imagine this sleepy town engulfed by a raging fire, but she couldn't picture it. There were places that would never be destroyed by a fire or a tornado or an earthquake, just as there were those lucky people who escaped disasters unscathed. Once upon a time, she had been considered one of those people, by her husband and the few friends to whom she had revealed her version of the story. A boating accident, she had told Lei when he was courting her in college. A boating accident that had killed five girls aged twelve and thir-


"The *New Yorker* of the 8-13 set."—*Ms.*

Stone Soup
The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

This beautiful children's magazine makes a great gift for budding writers and artists! One year for $37

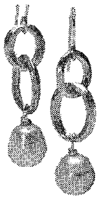
stonesoup.com | 800-447-4569
P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063 USA

NY

HACIENDA CUSIN
1602 CE
"400 YEARS OF WELCOME"
IN THE SIERRA OF ECUADOR
WWW.HACIENDACUSIN.COM
HORSERIDING • VALLEY WALKS • MARKETS
CELEBRATIONS • FAMILIES • GALAPAGOS
AMAZON & CLOUD FOREST LODGES

David Morgan
davidmorgan.com
800-324-4934

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK NOW
Leading subsidy book publisher seeks manuscripts. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, juvenile, religious, etc. New authors welcomed. For free 32-page illustrated guidebook **TD-70, call 1-800-821-3990 or write to: Vantage Press, 419 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016**
www.vantagepress.com


www.pearlpuddles.com
800.561.5509
modern freshwater pearls

TIMESHARES 60-80% off Retail!
★ Best Resorts, Prices &Weeks
★ 500+ Worldwide Resorts!
★ Call For FREE Catalog
Buy Direct! (800) 348-0094
holidaygroup.com/save

teen and left another feeling forever on the verge of drowning—she could see, from the look of concern and pity in his eyes, that he had interpreted her melancholy air that way. Any man who'd had a happy childhood and an uncomplicated adolescence could mistake the initial shock of encountering the senselessness of life as a sign of falling in love, the desire to protest and protect confused with a desire to love. He had been worn out by her, Lei had said toward the end of the marriage, not without bitterness. Sixteen years was a long time for anyone to endure a wife who had neither faith nor interest in the worldliness of marital life, he said, and she wondered if, by letting her go, he had finally outgrown his youth. His next wife would certainly not stand as a trophy in the tug-of-war between Lei and fate, death, and any mystery beyond his understanding.

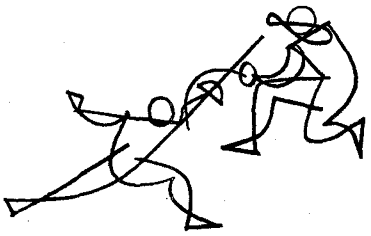
A man stopped on the other side of the street and waved up at Suchen. She recognized the bushy hair and the blue shirt, yet for a moment she willed her face to stay expressionless, hoping that Walter would think that he had waved at the wrong woman. But, without a trace of doubt, he crossed the empty street. Would she care for a cup of coffee, he called up. From where she stood, her elbows resting on the railing three floors above, he looked, despite his gray hair and beard, like a small child waiting for permission that he was almost certain would not be granted. She would have refused him politely had they been standing together on the ground, but, looking down at his upturned face, she felt that any excuse would be trivial. She signalled for him to wait, and when she entered the bedroom the air-conditioned atmosphere made her shiver as though she had just stepped into a pool of cold water. Suchen thought of Walter wandering the strange town, searching for a friendly face on a restaurant patio or a hotel balcony, and tried to convince herself that she had agreed to the coffee because of the helplessness that an old man could not erase from his face.

Walter took her to a café at the back of a gift shop. Apart from an idle man halfheartedly flipping through a book of local attractions, there was no one in the front of the shop, where miniature carved boats and model fish aged unwanted on the shelves. At the back of the shop, dim but for a single lamp hanging from the ceiling, there were a few unvarnished wooden tables. An old man at the counter nodded in greeting when he saw Walter. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, the best time for those in the mountains to revel in the joys of hiking and fishing before the sunshine thinned into dusk, but in the shop time seemed to be stranded, day taking forever to turn into night. The browser picked up a snow globe and shook it; when his cell phone beeped he perked up and left abruptly. Out of reflex, Suchen fumbled in her purse and found her phone.

"Are you waiting for a call?" Walter asked.

Suchen nodded and then shook her head. For a year, when she had not yet given up trying to be the wife Lei had hoped her to be, she had let herself be absorbed into a group of women who met one Saturday a month at a local café for brunch and gossip. After a while, she began to set an alarm on her cell phone; when it rang she would apologize for having to take an important phone call and leave. She could see the suspicion in the other women's eyes: she, a childless woman whose husband was enjoying a round of golf with their husbands—what urgency could she have but a secret love affair? If any of the women had ever mentioned this to their husbands, or if any of the husbands had mentioned it to Lei, Suchen would never know. Soon afterward, she had stopped replying to the group e-mails, and eventually the invitations had stopped coming.

The waiter came over to take their order: iced tea for Suchen, a strangely named energy drink for Walter. The waiter's face, tanned to a dark brown and deeply wrinkled, reminded Suchen of a walnut shell, yet his eyes, even in the dim light, glimmered with alertness, like the eyes of a mountain lion. He was wearing a T-shirt that was too big for his skinny body, and his hair, grayish white, was pulled up into a bun on top of his head. When he talked, his tone was unhurried. He did not chat with Walter as a waiter would with a returning customer, yet there was something in his manner that showed friendliness.



"He spent forty-plus years in India and only came back two years ago," Walter said when the man had gone back behind the counter. "Grew up in Connecticut and was a hippie for a while, but look at him now—all you see is an old sage, something this country could never produce."

Suchen wondered why the man, after spending almost a lifetime in India, had chosen to return. Once you knew a slice of someone's story, you wanted to understand more, she thought. Yet when Walter walked around town gathering other people's stories, his curiosity led him not to understand the world better but only to marvel at it.

"Are you in town just for tonight?" Walter asked.

"Yes."

"I'm leaving tomorrow, too," Walter said. "The event is this evening, but I came early to have a bit of time to myself. It's a nice place when it's not busy."

There was not much to say to this, so Suchen agreed that indeed the town was quiet and lovely.

Walter waited a moment and then said that the hosts were a couple who produced a popular HBO show. Suchen apologized and said she did not watch TV, and Walter seemed disappointed. Not that he watched much TV, either, he said, but he thought that she, being from Los Angeles, would be familiar with these things. When Suchen did not speak, he asked her where she was going.

It was the most natural question to ask a traveller. A waitress with her hair dyed purple, in a town called Fortuna, had called Suchen "honey" and asked her where she was headed; a mechanic in a coastal town, whose name Suchen had forgotten, had changed a flat tire for her and then asked, too. Vancouver, she had replied both times, and both times her questioners had seemed impressed by the distance she had travelled. She was not in a particular hurry, she had said when the waitress asked how many hours she had to put in each day. More of a road trip than seeing the city, she had replied unconvincingly when the mechanic, with a mild stutter, commented that he wouldn't care for that long of a drive, even though Vancouver was said to be a fine city. She did not tell anyone that she spent much of her time looking out at the Pacific from empty beaches, some of them narrow with coarse sand, though farther north many of the beaches were rocky, desolate in the falling dusk, when seagulls circled hungrily and waves deposited dead seaweed. These beaches made Suchen think of a ragged shoreline in Ireland or the clashing waves of the North Sea at the mouth of a Norwegian fjord. She did not know why she thought of these places, only that she would never have a chance to visit them, along with many other places on many other continents, to confirm or correct her imaginings. The morning before, she had decided to leave the coast, convincing herself that she wanted to drive across the Rockies and see the big sky in the Western states. She would always be able to find a patch of water, she told herself, but even when she was studying the rivers and lakes in the road atlas she knew she was procrastinating.

"Say, do you want to come with me to the event this evening?"

Suchen looked up quickly, but there did not seem to be a trace of guile in Walter's face. She didn't have the right outfit for a social gathering, Suchen said—not the best excuse but the first to occur to her.

Walter glanced at Suchen, and she knew he wanted to say that she would look just fine in her blouse and skirt; she knew, too, that he could tell she was inventing an excuse. "Is there anything that's bothering you?" he asked in a gentle voice, leaning over his dark-green drink.

Travelling alone must have made her sink too easily into her own thoughts, she said.

"My wife died earlier this year," Walter said. "Leukemia. We were married for thirty-five years."

"It must be hard for you," Suchen said, looking into her iced tea. She wondered if he had informed the townspeople he had met of his loss: the waitress at the restaurant, who was too far removed from death to be sympathetic; the old man here at the café, who, despite his kindness, would not feel sufficiently attached to this ephemeral world to acknowledge the loss as irreplaceable.

"She asked for a divorce when she knew she wouldn't live long."

"Why?" Suchen said, though as she spoke she realized that she might already know the answer. She imagined the wife watching Walter and herself aging, waiting to endure his death, aware that the solitude afterward would be enough of a compensation. Her illness must have come as a disappointment; life had not been lenient enough to let her keep her secret. Her desire to be alone while still alive must have ultimately trumped the guilt that came from making an incom-

Tour the National Gallery, London with a Renowned Art Historian

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day™
GREAT PROFESSORS, GREAT COURSES, GREAT VALUE GUARANTEED.™

Claude-Oscar Monet, *The Water-Lily Pond* © The National Gallery, London.

Of all the world's great art museums, the National Gallery, London is the only place where you can truly encounter the breathtaking scope of European painting from the late medieval period to the 19th century.

Now, take an unforgettable tour of this world-class art collection in **Museum Masterpieces: The National Gallery, London**. In 24 fascinating lectures, noted art scholar and Professor Catherine B. Scallen offers you keen observations and insights into this remarkable institution and its many masterpieces.

This course is part of The Great Courses® series of non-credit recorded college lectures by The Teaching Company®. More than 300 courses taught by award winning professors on a wide array of subjects in the sciences and the liberal arts are available now on our website.

Museum Masterpieces: The National Gallery, London

Taught by Catherine B. Scallen, Case Western Reserve University

Lecture Titles

1. The Story of the National Gallery, London
2. Late Medieval Painting
3. Early Renaissance Italian Painting
4. Netherlandish Portraits and Devotional Images
5. Florence—Center of 15th-Century Italian Art
6. 15th-Century Venetian Art
7. The High Renaissance in Central Italy
8. Titian and His Venetian Contemporaries
9. Venetian Masters—Tintoretto and Veronese
10. Painting for the Courts, c. 1515–1575
11. Northern European Masters—Bosch to Bruegel
12. The Innovation of Carracci and Caravaggio
13. The Rise of French Art—Poussin and Claude
14. Flemish Masters—Rubens and Van Dyck
15. A Golden Age of Spanish Painting
16. Dutch History, Portraiture, Genre Scenes
17. Dutch Still Lifes, Townscapes, Landscapes
18. The Genius of Rembrandt
19. Venetian and Spanish Masters, c. 1740–1820
20. The Charms of 18th-Century French Painting
21. British Painting Comes of Age
22. British and French Masters, c. 1785–1860
23. Impressionism in France
24. Post-Impressionism

Order Today!
Offer expires Thursday, December 24, 2009

Museum Masterpieces: The National Gallery, London
Course No. 7544
24 lectures (30 minutes/lecture)

DVDs ~~$254.95~~ NOW $69.95
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Audio CDs ~~$179.95~~ NOW $49.95
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Priority Code: 33791

ACT NOW!

1-800-TEACH-12
www.TEACH12.com/4nyr

prehensible request of a husband who would soon lose his wife.

"If only I knew the answer," Walter said, his voice hoarse; but when Suchen looked up he was studying his palms, dry-eyed. On his ring finger was a wedding band, aged though not dulled. "My children told me that sometimes illness makes people act strangely."

"Did you agree to divorce her?"

"No," he said, his tone defensive. "How could I?"

"I thought that was what she wanted."

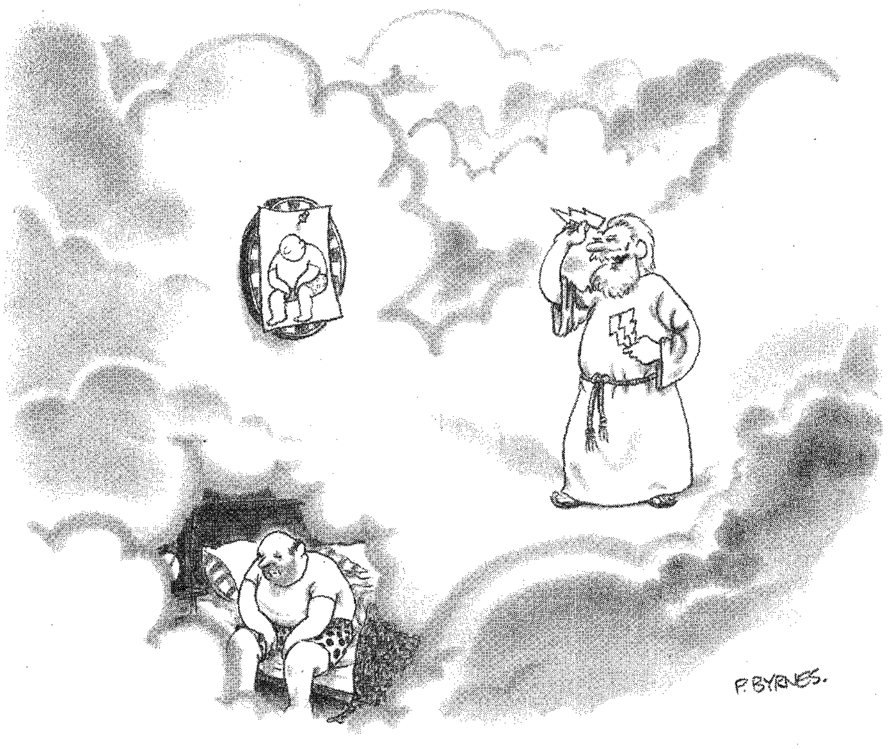
She had asked twice in one week, Walter said, but when he had said no both times she had not mentioned it again.

Why dwell on a minor episode when death was the more lasting tragedy, Suchen wanted to ask, although she knew that long after he accepted his wife's death he would remain tormented by her request for a divorce. When the dead departed, they took away any falsehoods that they might have allowed us to believe while alive; we who are left behind have to embark on a different life, since the dead are no longer here to help us deceive ourselves. Suchen had often wondered how she and the five girls would have turned out if the others had not drowned. They would have drifted apart, she suspected, becoming wives and mothers, and if they had ever reunited they would have been too occupied with their earthly duties to let the memory of their scheme surface. Yet through their absence the girls had made themselves more present than anyone else in Suchen's world, and she had lived not only for herself but for their unconsumed lives: when she sat in a movie theatre on a weekday afternoon, the tears she shed were not for the romance on the screen but for a love story that might have broken the heart of one of the girls; when she reluctantly mingled with strangers at a party, she was convincing the girls that they had not missed much in this life; at the farmers' market, she picked up fruits with exotic names and fragrances because the girls had not heard of or tasted them in their small home town; when she was having sex with Lei, she watched them watch him with pity in their eyes, because only they knew that he would never be able to touch her the way their deaths had touched her. "You should feel lucky you are the one alive," Suchen said. "There are many things in life that are stranger than death."

Walter looked up, stung, Suchen thought, by the cruelty of her words. She unfolded her white paper napkin and began to dab her straw on it, leaving faint tea-colored dots. "When I was thirteen, five friends and I decided to commit suicide together," she said, and, without meeting Walter's eyes, she shook her head. "You want to ask why. Everyone did. The truth is I could not answer that question at the time and I still can't answer it. All I can tell you is that it was not an impulsive action. We talked and we planned and we carried it out almost to the end."

Almost: Suchen watched Walter flinch at the word and then let hope flicker in his eyes. A scheme like theirs could have failed easily. They could have stopped it at any moment: When they had looked in the almanac to choose the date (there was no day described as good for killing oneself, so they had settled for a day on which it was good to take a journey). Or when they had pooled their allowances to buy an expensive bottle of liquor and hidden it in the tall weeds on the far shore of the reservoir the day before the chosen date. The field had been awash with May sunshine when they set out after lunch, their schoolmates returning to classes while they, buoyant in their truancy, gathered nameless blue and white flowers that they later scattered carelessly near the dock. An adult bicycling on his way out of town could have yelled at them from the road, asking why they were not in school. Uncle Liang, the town's hermit, who lived in a shack by the reservoir, could have woken from his midday nap early and caught the young thieves clumsily rowing his boat into the open water.

They had taken turns rowing in pairs until they were out of immediate sight of the town and the road, and when they stopped, the boat rocked slightly under their shifting weight, the water almost even with the rim. For a while they sat, and Suchen remembered the splash of a fish breaking the surface of the water, and two egrets taking off with unhurried elegance, one after the other. The girls could have decided to row back and face the questions from their parents and teachers, spending an extra Saturday afternoon in school for their misdemeanor; such a possibility, however, had not occurred to Suchen, and if any of the other girls had thought of it they hadn't brought it up. They had giggled as they divided the liquor among six identical enamel cups, their school registration numbers



"Let's see, where should Jerry hurt today?"

printed in red on the bottoms, and when they had encouraged one another to drink they'd done so with laughter and coughing and, later, tears. Why, her parents had asked her when it was all over; so had the parents of the five girls, wishing her dead, no doubt, so that their own daughters could be revived; the schoolteachers and the reporters had asked, and now, too, sitting across from her, a man whom she barely knew. "Why?" Walter said, his voice faraway, as if coming to her in a dream. "What happened?"

"The other five girls drowned," Suchen said. She did not say that none of them had known how to swim; nor did she say that after they had swallowed the liquor they had cried, not out of fear or regret but because there was nothing left, by then, for them to do. When they had stepped into the water, the boat had overturned, and the chaos afterward seemed to last only a few seconds—not much of a chaos, because Suchen did not remember any of her friends making a noise or struggling. For years, she had tried in vain to make sense of that moment of farewell, but all she could recall was two heads bobbing before vanishing under the boat, the linked arms of two other friends, and a wave from Meimei, the youngest of the six, as she sank beneath the surface. Suchen never understood what had driven her to grasp the oar at the last moment. The water had been cold, her teeth had chattered, but her hands had not let go of the oar—perhaps she had been a true coward, or perhaps she had been overcome by animal instinct, hanging on to life blindly. We had to, she had replied when her questioners would not leave her alone, although no one had understood her. At the border of life and death, said a folktale, there was a river called the River of Forgetting, and on the bridge an old woman called Mrs. Dream offered tea to travellers; once you drank her tea and crossed the bridge, you would forget everything on this side of the world. Many times, in the five weeks during which their talk had gone from a hazy idea to a concrete plan, they had promised one another that they would not drink Mrs. Dream's tea. They would travel together in the next world as they had in this world, their love and understanding of one another free from families and other earthly burdens.

"But why? Why did six young girls want to do a crazy thing like that?" Walter said, the gentle concern in his eyes replaced by an angry and disapproving look.

"If only I knew the answer," Suchen said. Afterward, while the girls' parents and teachers groped for any possible explanation—divorced parents for one of the girls; an older sister's failed affair that had ended with the birth of an illegitimate baby; difficult schoolwork; the unhealthy influence of cheap romance novels; hormones and adolescent mood swings—Suchen had remained contemptuously silent, the last warrior standing between the world and her felled comrades.

Walter fidgeted in his seat, unable to find the right words for his curiosity—or perhaps he was simply eager to end the conversation. People would have shaken their heads in pity had one young girl decided to kill herself, but when six girls took a journey like that together people felt threatened and rejected by a bond they could not understand. Suchen imagined what Lei would have said had she told him the truth; over the years, she had thought of making the confession, thinking that a man who shared his life with her deserved more than a lie, more than silence. But how could she have explained to him that she had never guessed the meaning of Meimei's wave, that she would never know if Meimei had been beckoning her to come along on a joyous journey or begging her, the last one afloat, to save her? Lei had insisted that a new life in a new country—marriage, friendship, children—would save her from her despair, but why would she want to be saved when her friends and their memories would become the casualties of her battle to live on?

Suchen looked up at the afternoon sunshine, framed by the rectangular door, waiting to claim Walter and herself. Perhaps Walter would invite her once more to join him for the evening; perhaps she would say yes, another procrastination, like the detour from the coast. When they parted, both would feel vaguely comforted, he by the momentary warmth he had offered another human being whose senseless tragedy had eclipsed his bewilderment, she by the knowledge that it had been good of her to let Lei go, that he would not become an old man seeking companionship among the strangers in the world. ♦

Undiminished zest for life!

Diverse and appealing retirement community minutes from Oberlin College and its Conservatory of Music. Over 400 cultural events a year. Coordinated system of residential and health care options.

KENDAL®
at Oberlin
Serving older adults in the Quaker tradition.
Oberlin, Ohio
800.548.9469
www.kao.kendal.org

Greek Fisherman's Cap $32
85% Wool, 15% Nylon • Sizes 6¾–8
Black, Navy, Grey, Brown
Check or Credit Card w/Exp. Date.
Add $3 shipping plus $1 each additional
www.johnhelmer.com
John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. N119 • Portland, OR 97205

Free Catalog
Specialty Bow Ties
800-488-8437
Handmade silk ties by
Beau Ties Ltd. of Vermont
www.beautiesltd.com/ad916

Saratoga Lamp Co.
Crafted panel lamps
Now taking holiday orders
408.315.9507
SaratogaLampCo.com

MEN'S WIDE SHOES
EEE-EEEEEE, SIZES 5-20
200 styles • FREE catalog
1-800-992-WIDE
HITCHCOCK SHOES, INC.
Dept. 69K2 Hingham, MA 02043 **www.wideshoes.com**

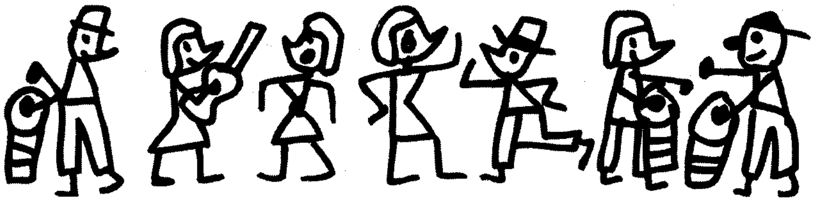
BOOKSBYTHEFOOT.COM

Dozens of styles for Interior Designers and Book Lovers, starting at $6.99 per linear foot.

"A room without books is like a body without a soul."
—Cicero

MAESTRO CLASSICS™
London Philharmonic Orchestra
classical music CDs for kids
NEW! The Tortoise and the Hare
(866) 432-7624
www.MaestroClassics.com

THE CRITICS



THE THEATRE

TALK TALK

Richard Foreman puts language onstage.

BY HILTON ALS

Uh-oh. Here comes an ominous-looking thought. Three of them, actually, all dressed the same: black suits, white shirts, black shoes. Each of them is called Servant, and they're among the first people we see in the elegiac and beautiful "Idiot Savant," by the writer and director Richard Foreman (at the Public). Collectively, the Servants (Joel Israel, Eric Magnus, and Daniel Allen Nelson) remind you of those self-replicating guys in "The Matrix," but without the sunglasses and the stilted speeches. In fact, the Servants don't have much to say, but we know that they're essential to Foreman's vision of things, because if his dense, hilarious stage work is about anything at all it's his state of mind, his rapidly blinking consciousness. "All of my plays are about my attempt to stage my particular rhythm of perception, which is to say, admittedly, the plays are about *me*," he has written.

Scenes from Foreman's biography: He was born in New York in 1937, to upper-middle-class Jewish parents. He graduated from Brown University and received his M.F.A. in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama. As a student, Foreman wrote a number of naturalistic dramas that followed the traditional Western model of conflict followed by catharsis. But, after a while, he found that he wasn't interested in plays like that. Back in New York, he encountered the work of the filmmaker and performer Jack Smith and the composer La Monte Young, who, along with several other artists, were producing movies and music and theatre that not only unfolded in real time but also deliberately exaggerated time and space through minimalism and repetition. Eventually, Foreman became a part of this post-dramatic performance scene, staging pieces that centered on language, rather than action, and expanded the audience's idea of what a play could be.

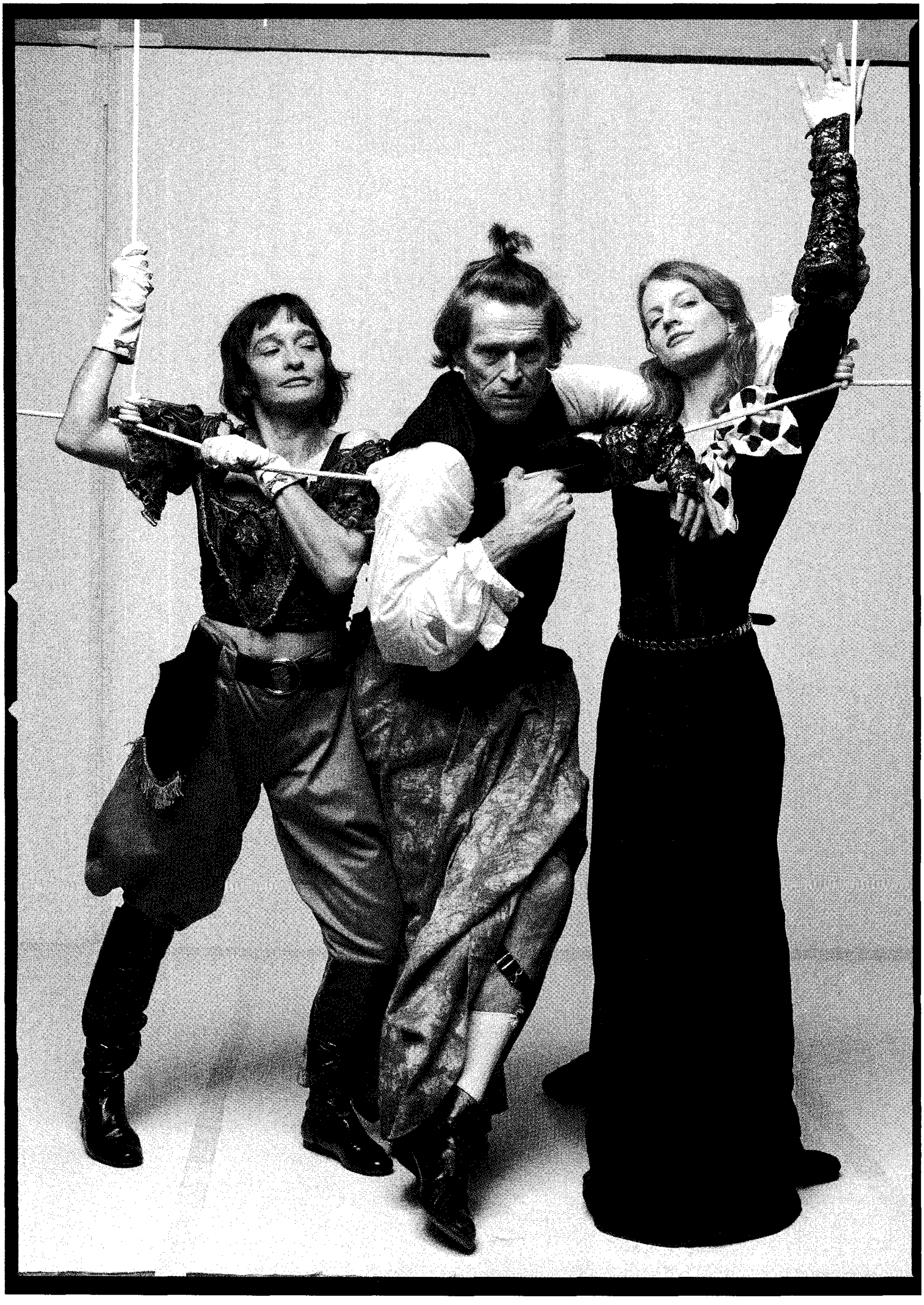
Foreman uses language like paint; he sketches a line, or drips some words, the better to emphasize their *thingness*. Rarely does he ask speech to do anything as simple as clarify a point or establish a character's motivation. He embraces mystification and flux. In the introduction to his 1989 play "Lava" (Foreman's essays on his own work are as brilliant and as elegantly composed as George Bernard Shaw's), he wrote, "There are writers who despair that a gap exists between the self and the words that come, but for me that gap is the field of all creativity—it's an ecstatic field rather than a field of despair. . . . It's the unfathomable from which everything pours forth."

In "Idiot Savant," the Servants, standing as stiff as boards, sometimes aim bows and arrows at the title character's head. They are his superego, the self-conscious meanies who want to control the Idiot Savant (Willem Dafoe, in a great, expansive performance) and steer him away from his obsession with the only thing he can do: talk and think about language. In a way, the Idiot Savant knows that he's limited. When he takes the stage dressed like an eighteenth-century Japanese samurai, with his hair pulled up on top of his head, his mouth is plugged. As he stares out at us, we realize that he is of a piece with Foreman's archaic stage design: the walls are dark; chandeliers provide the illumination; a railing separates the stage from the audience. After a minute or two, a woman named Marie (the astonishing Alenka Kraigher) slinks onstage. She's dressed in a black, Mary Queen of Scots-type dress with elaborate gold cuffs. With her long neck and her pale skin, she's a kind of dominatrix-as-marionette. She moves and speaks slowly, gazing at the gag in the Idiot Savant's mouth:

> Marie: Oh Idiot Savant—why stuff that provocative dental instrument into your mouth—impeding all possible "human speech"? (*He takes it out. Pause*)—Thank God, you've removed it.
>
> Idiot Savant: As a result, dear lady—am I no longer capable of saving us from magic words?
>
> Marie: But they occur very infrequently.
>
> Idiot Savant: Is it true?
>
> Marie: Have they begun happening?
>
> Idiot Savant: Are we under attack, Madame?
>
> Marie: What makes chosen words—magic?
>
> Idiot Savant: Who among us is prepared for an explanation?
>
> Marie: (*Pause, thinks*) Me?
>
> Idiot Savant: Me?

In Foreman's world, the female characters are often the provocateurs. While the Idiot Savant is repeatedly left scratching his head (Dafoe makes his character's confusion physical by crashing about the stage like a short-tempered iguana), it's Marie who moves things along emotionally, despite the offstage voice (Richard Foreman) warning the actors at the start of the play not to "try to carry this play forward. Let it slowly creep over the stage, with no help, with no end in view." Foreman says that he finds the exaggerated, carefully articulated " 'silent movie' style of acting . . . more profound and penetrating than naturalistic acting." And Dafoe and Kraigher work within this style—Kraigher is a taller, more willowy Lillian Gish in the 1928 silent classic "The Wind"—but they push against it as well. They can't help it; they're stars, who make the most of the constraints that Foreman imposes on them—a tight script, a cramped set, a range of offstage sounds, from a woman screaming "Watch out!" to a telephone ringing dully—while announcing, through their performances, Fuck it, we have personalities, too. Kraigher was born in Slovenia, and she's a filmmaker as well as an actor. Her accent adds a lovely extra

ABOVE: MARISCAL



Elina Löwensohn, Willem Dafoe, and Alenka Kraigher in "Idiot Savant." Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

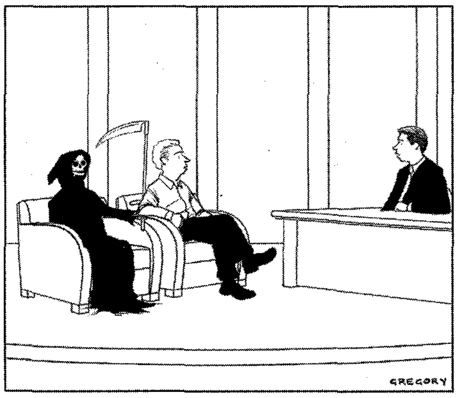
Advertisement

vanity fair
GQ
DO NOT OPEN UNTIL CHRISTMAS

Extraordinary art prints and gifts, featuring images from *Vogue, Vanity Fair, Gourmet, House & Garden, Golf Digest,* and more, only at the Condé Nast Store.

www.condenaststore.com

CARTOON KIT



Create your own drag-and-drop cartoon.

Enter at newyorker.com, where five favorites will be featured.

And register for a chance at a trip to New York and an office tour led by our cartoon editor, Robert Mankoff.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Promotion begins Oct. 26, 2009, at 12:01 A.M. E.T. and ends Nov. 22 at 11:59 P.M. E.T. Open to all legal residents of the U.S. and Canada (except Quebec) who are at least 13 years old. For full rules and to enter go to www.newyorker.com/go/cartoonkit. PRIZES: Sweepstakes: 28 daily winners of "On the Money: The Economy in Cartoons 1925–2009" (ARV: $24.99). Grand Prize ARV: $3,000. Contest: Winners' slide show ARV: $0. Odds of winning random drawings depend on the number of entries received. SPONSOR: Condé Nast Publications, 4 Times Square, NY, NY 10036.

NEWYORKER.COM/GO/CARTOONKIT

layer of otherness to her character's French-sounding locutions. In casting her, Foreman is playing with the very notion of speech and how it sounds to foreign ears. (The audience is foreign to Marie, not vice versa.) Her banter with Dafoe is the primary "action" of the play. Like Kate Manheim and Kyle deCamp, who have appeared in other Foreman plays, Kraigher is perfectly cast, and unforgettable, because she doesn't give in to his ideas completely—or to the Idiot Savant's. No man will be the boss of her. She provides the necessary resistance that makes this comedic drama just that.

"Idiot Savant" is also a kind of journey through consciousness. Have Foreman's plays ever been about anything else? While his peer Elizabeth LeCompte, the director of the thirty-four-year-old Wooster Group, looks at the ways in which technology scintillatingly degrades theatre as a "high art," Foreman is more interested in the inner life, in how our brains try to navigate the stops and starts that come with thinking and feeling. Foreman's Idiot Savant is always being blocked by wordmeisters greater than himself—Marie and Olga (Elina Löwensohn)—who challenge not only his ideas but his physical space. (Olga does so like a bully getting revved up for a fight, while Marie is more likely to play on her desire, or lack thereof, for the Idiot Savant.) Of course, the women join forces after a while, and condescendingly exclaim "Oooo!" whenever the Idiot Savant thinks that he's got something figured out. But they're really just kicking sand in his face.

The term "idiot savant"—an autistic or otherwise mentally handicapped person who has one area of genius—is never defined in Foreman's text, but Dafoe plays one to the hilt. And so, in a way, does Foreman. With this show, he is telling us that he has done one thing—amazingly—for more than forty years: he has made theatre that has changed the theatre. Now it may be time for something else. Foreman has said that "Idiot Savant" is his last play, that he will concentrate on making films. One can only hope that this is a lie of the mind. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Danville (Ill.) Commercial-News.

Aggravated battery at the Friendly Tavern, 216 South St.

BOOKS

HOSED

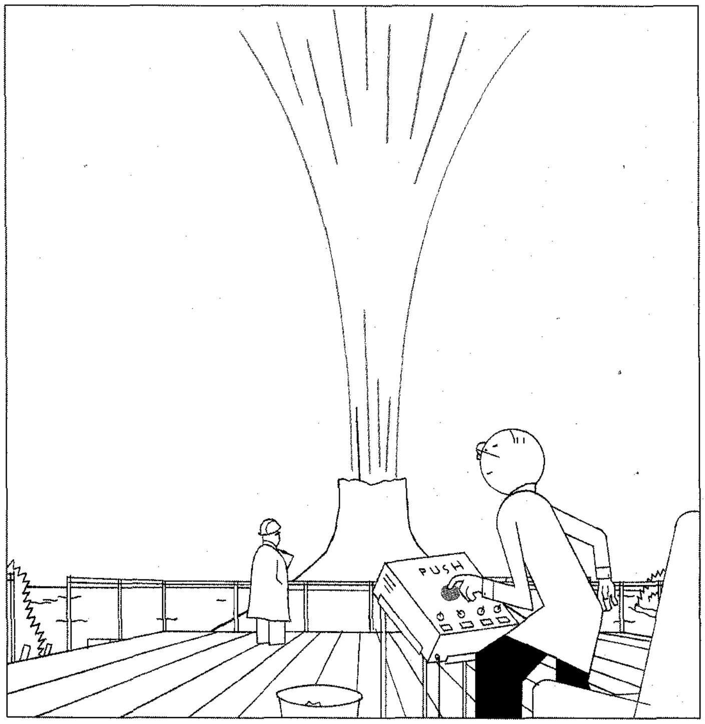
Is there a quick fix for the climate?

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

In the eighteen-sixties, the quickest, or at least the most popular, way to get around New York was in a horse-drawn streetcar. The horsecars, which operated on iron rails, offered a smoother ride than the horse-drawn omnibuses they replaced. (The *Herald* described the experience of travelling by omnibus as a form of "modern martyrdom.") New Yorkers made some thirty-five million horsecar trips a year at the start of the decade. By 1870, that figure had tripled.

The standard horsecar, which seated twenty, was drawn by a pair of roans and ran sixteen hours a day. Each horse could work only a four-hour shift, so operating a single car required at least eight animals. Additional horses were needed if the route ran up a grade, or if the weather was hot. Horses were also employed to transport goods; as the amount of freight arriving at the city's railroad terminals increased, so, too, did the number of horses needed to distribute it along local streets. By 1880, there were at least a hundred and fifty thousand horses living in New York, and probably a great many more. Each one relieved itself of, on average, twenty-two pounds of manure a day, meaning that the city's production of horse droppings ran to at least forty-five thousand tons a month. George Waring, Jr., who served as the city's Street Cleaning Commissioner, described Manhattan as stinking "with the emanations of putrefying organic matter." Another observer wrote that the streets were "literally carpeted with a warm, brown matting . . . smelling to heaven." In the early part of the century, farmers in the surrounding counties had been happy to pay for the city's manure, which could be converted into rich fertilizer, but by the later part the market was so glutted that stable owners had to pay to have the stuff removed, with the result that it often accumulated in vacant lots, providing breeding grounds for flies.

LAURENT CILLUFFO



"SuperFreakonomics" has some ideas for reëngineering the planet.

The problem just kept piling up until, in the eighteen-nineties, it seemed virtually insurmountable. One commentator predicted that by 1930 horse manure would reach the level of Manhattan's third-story windows. New York's troubles were not New York's alone; in 1894, the *Times* of London forecast that by the middle of the following century every street in the city would be buried under nine feet of manure. It was understood that flies were a transmission vector for disease, and a public-health crisis seemed imminent. When the world's first international urban-planning conference was held, in 1898, it was dominated by discussion of the manure situation. Unable to agree upon any solutions—or to imagine cities without horses—the delegates broke up the meeting, which had been scheduled to last a week and a half, after just three days.

Then, almost overnight, the crisis passed. This was not brought about by regulation or by government policy. Instead, it was technological innovation that made the difference. With electrification and the development of the internal-combustion engine, there were new ways to move people and goods around. By 1912, autos in New York outnumbered horses, and in 1917 the city's last horse-drawn streetcar made its final run. All the anxieties about a metropolis inundated by ordure had been misplaced.

This story—call it the Parable of Horseshit—has been told many times, with varying aims. The latest iteration is offered by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, in their new book, "SuperFreakonomics: Global Cooling, Patriotic Prostitutes, and Why Suicide Bombers Should Buy Life Insurance" (William Morrow; $29.99). According to Levitt and Dubner, the story's message is a simple one: if, at any particular moment, things look bleak, it's because people are seeing them the wrong way. "When the solution to a given problem doesn't lie right before our eyes, it is easy to assume that no solution exists," they write. "But history has shown again and again that such assumptions are wrong."

Levitt and Dubner tell the horseshit story as a prelude to discussing climate change: "Just as equine activity once threatened to stomp out civilization, there is now a fear that human activity will do the same." As usual, they say, the anxiety is unwarranted. First, the global-warming threat has been exaggerated; there is uncertainty about how, exactly, the earth will respond to rising CO_2 levels, and uncertainty has "a nasty way of making us con-

"Any chance we could stop by my broker's house?"

jure up the very worst possibilities." Second, solutions are bound to present themselves: "Technological fixes are often far simpler, and therefore cheaper, than the doomsayers could have imagined."

Levitt and Dubner have in mind a very particular kind of "technological fix." Wind turbines, solar cells, biofuels—these are all, in their view, more trouble than they're worth. Such technologies are aimed at reducing CO_2 emissions, which is the wrong goal, they say. Cutting back is difficult and, finally, annoying. Who really wants to use less oil? This sounds, the pair write, "like wearing sackcloth." Wouldn't it be simpler just to reëngineer the planet?

One scheme that Levitt and Dubner endorse features a fleet of fibreglass boats equipped with machines that would increase the cloud cover over the oceans. Another calls for constructing a vast network of tubes for sucking cold water from the depths of the sea to the surface. Far and away their favorite plan involves mimicking volcanoes.

During a major eruption, huge quantities—up to tens of millions of tons—of sulfur dioxide are shot into the atmosphere. Once aloft, the SO_2 reacts to form droplets known as sulfate aerosols, which float around for months. These aerosols act like tiny mirrors, reflecting sunlight back into space. The net result is a cooling effect. In the year following the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, in the Philippines, average global temperatures fell, temporarily, by about one degree Fahrenheit.

"Once you eliminate the moralism and the angst, the task of reversing global warming boils down to a straightforward engineering problem," Levitt and Dubner write. All we need to do is figure out a way to shoot huge quantities of sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere on our own. This could be done, they say, by sending up an eighteen-mile-long hose: "For anyone who loves cheap and simple solutions, things don't get much better."

Neither Levitt, an economist, nor Dubner, a journalist, has any training in climate science—or, for that matter, in science of any kind. It's their contention that they don't need it. The whole conceit behind "SuperFreakonomics" and, before that, "Freakonomics," which sold some four million copies, is that a dispassionate, statistically minded thinker can find patterns and answers in the data that those who are emotionally invested in the material will have missed. (The subtitle of "Freakonomics," published in 2005, is "A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything.") In this way, Levitt and Dubner claim to have solved the mystery of why crime, after soaring in the nineteen-eighties, dropped in the nineteen-nineties. (The explanation, they say, is the legalization of abortion, some eighteen years earlier.) They also have proved—at least to their own satisfaction—that names like Ansley and Philippa will be popular for girls in the coming decade, that reading to your kids doesn't matter, and that drunks should be encouraged to drive rather than walk.

Given their emphasis on cold, hard numbers, it's noteworthy that Levitt and Dubner ignore what are, by now, whole libraries' worth of data on global warming. Indeed, just about everything they have to say on the topic is, factually speaking, wrong. Among the many matters they misrepresent are: the significance of carbon emissions as a climate-forcing agent, the mechanics of climate modelling, the temperature record of the past decade, and the climate history of the past several hundred thousand years. Raymond T. Pierrehumbert is a climatologist who, like Levitt, teaches at the University of Chicago. In a particularly scathing critique, he composed an open letter to Levitt, which he posted on the blog RealClimate.

"The problem wasn't necessarily that you talked to the wrong experts or talked to too few of them," he observes. "The problem was that you failed to do the most elementary thinking." Pierrehumbert carefully dissects one of the arguments that Levitt and Dubner seem to subscribe to—that solar cells, because they are dark, actually contribute to global warming—and shows it to be fallacious. "*Really simple arithmetic*, which you could not be bothered to do, would have been enough to tell you," he writes, that this claim "is complete and utter nonsense."

But what's most troubling about "SuperFreakonomics" isn't the authors' many blunders; it's the whole spirit of the enterprise. Though climate change is a grave problem, Levitt and Dubner treat it mainly as an opportunity to show how clever they are. Leaving aside the question of whether geoengineering, as it is known in scientific circles, is even possible—have you ever tried sending an eighteen-mile-long hose into the stratosphere?—their analysis is terrifyingly cavalier. A world whose atmosphere is loaded with carbon dioxide, on the one hand, and sulfur dioxide, on the other, would be a fundamentally different place from the earth as we know it. Among the many likely consequences of shooting SO_2 above the clouds would be new regional weather patterns (after major volcanic eruptions, Asia and Africa have a nasty tendency to experience drought), ozone depletion, and increased acid rain. Meanwhile, as long as the concentration of atmospheric CO_2 continued to rise, more and more sulfur dioxide would have to be pumped into the air to counteract it. The amount of direct sunlight reaching the earth would fall, even as the oceans became increasingly acidic. There are eminent scientists—among them the Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen—who argue that geoengineering should be seriously studied, but only with the understanding that it represents a risky, last-ditch attempt to avert catastrophe.

"By far the preferred way" to confront climate change, Crutzen has written, "is to lower the emissions of greenhouse gases."

Levitt and Dubner call their chapter on global warming "What Do Al Gore and Mount Pinatubo Have in Common?" As it happens, Gore has also a written a new book on the subject, "Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis" (Rodale; \$26.99). Like Levitt and Dubner, Gore argues that if people simply put their minds to it they could figure out a way to deal with global warming. "We have at our fingertips all of the tools we need to solve three or four climate crises—and we only need to solve one," he writes. But the similarities end there.

Where Levitt and Dubner avoid climate scientists, Gore appears to have talked to just about every one of them. (The acknowledgments for "Our Choice" run to four single-spaced pages of tiny type.) If you're curious about the relative contribution each of the major greenhouse gases makes to climate change, Gore has it. (CO_2 is the largest contributor, followed by methane.) If you want to know how a photovoltaic cell works, or a solar thermal tower, or where the ten largest wind farms in the United States are, you can find that in the book as well. Gore runs through the difficulties of feeding power from intermittent sources, like the sun and the wind, into the electrical grid, and describes how these difficulties might be overcome. He discusses carbon capture and sequestration, nuclear energy, agricultural policy, and conservation.

Just about the only strategy for coping with climate change that Gore isn't interested in is geoengineering. Indeed, the very idea strikes him as delusional. "We are already involved in a massive, unplanned planetary experiment," he writes. "We should not begin yet another planetary experiment in the hope that it will somehow magically cancel out the effects of the one we already have."

Though Levitt and Dubner couldn't have read "Our Choice," they nevertheless manage to anticipate Gore's position. The two argue that *his* views are the ones that rest on magical thinking. "If you think like a cold-blooded economist instead of a warm-hearted humanist, Gore's reasoning doesn't track," they write. "It's not that we don't *know how* to stop polluting the atmosphere. We don't *want* to stop, or aren't willing to pay the price." Here the two have a point. By the end of "Our Choice," it may be clear that we possess the tools needed to dramatically reduce our carbon emissions, but the book has also shown—intentionally or not—that deploying them would require a lot from us. It would mean changing the way we eat, shop, manufacture, and get around, and, ultimately, how we see ourselves.

It is the difficulty of imagining such changes that makes schemes like Levitt and Dubner's at once so alluring and so dangerous. Just about every time anyone with any sort of credentials offers a "simple and cheap" solution to global warming, the idea is hailed as bold or innovative, and taken far more seriously than it deserves to be. Recently, *The Atlantic* named the theoretical physicist Freeman Dyson one of two dozen "brave thinkers" who are shaping the future. This was not for his pioneering work on quantum electro-dynamics and the exclusion principle but for his proposal that global warming will be resolved by "carbon-eating trees." For his "apostatical" views on climate change, Dyson was also the subject of a generally admiring profile earlier this year in the *Times Magazine*.

"Carbon-eating trees" certainly sound nice. But how, exactly, would they work? Dyson has never elaborated, and neither the *Times* nor *The Atlantic* seems to have asked. Would the trees take up CO_2 while they're alive, and release it back into the atmosphere only slowly, once they're dead? If so, the world already has those sorts of trees. They are called, well, trees. Or would the trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and convert it, as Dyson once vaguely suggested, into "liquid fuels," so that instead of at gas stations we could fill up our cars at orchards? In that case, the idea seems not so much "brave" as off the wall. (Dyson, it should be noted, has also proposed genetically engineering plants made of silicon and trees that could be grown on Mars.)

To be skeptical of climate models and credulous about things like carbon-eating trees and cloudmaking machinery and hoses that shoot sulfur into the sky is to replace a faith in science with a belief in science fiction. This is the turn that "SuperFreakonomics" takes, even as its authors repeatedly extoll their hard-headedness. All of which goes to show that, while some forms of horseshit are no longer a problem, others will always be with us. ◆

NEWYORKER.COM/GO/ASK

Elizabeth Kolbert chats with readers.

BOOKS

LIFT AND SEPARATE

Why is feminism still so divisive?

BY ARIEL LEVY

Bra burning—the most famous habit of women's libbers—caused a fair amount of consternation back in the seventies, and the smoke has lingered. Wives and mothers were torching the most intimate accessory of control; what might they put a match to next? "Often today those who cherish family life feel, even in their own homes, under constant assault," the cultural critic Michael Novak wrote in 1979. The goals of the women's-liberation movement, he saw, were incompatible with the structure of the traditional family. That's why bra burning became the most durable and unsettling image of modern feminism.

EQUALITY
THE TIME IS NOW
DON'T BE A CLOWN TAKE WOMEN SERIOUSLY

A women's-liberation parade on Fifth Avenue, in New York, in August, 1971.

BETTMANN/CORBIS

So it may be worth noting that it never actually happened. In 1968, at a protest against the Miss America pageant, in Atlantic City, feminists tossed items that they felt were symbolic of women's oppression into a Freedom Trash Can: copies of *Playboy*, high-heeled shoes, corsets and girdles. Lindsy Van Gelder, a reporter for the *Post*, wrote a piece about the protest in which she compared the trash-can procession to the burning of draft cards at antiwar marches, and a myth was born. In her engaging *tour d'horizon* "When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present" (Little, Brown; $27.99), Gail Collins quotes Van Gelder's lament: "I shudder to think that will be my epitaph—'she invented bra burning.' "

It's as if feminism were plagued by a kind of false-memory syndrome. Where we think we've been on our great womanly march forward often has less to do with the true coördinates than with our fears and desires. We tend to imagine the fifties and the early sixties, for example, as a time when most American women were housewives. "In reality, however, by 1960 there were as many women working as there had been at the peak of World War II, and the vast majority of them were married," Collins writes. Forty per cent of wives whose children were old enough to go to school had jobs. This isn't just about the haze of retrospection: back then, women saw themselves as homemakers, too. Esther Peterson, President Kennedy's Assistant Secretary of Labor, asked a high-school auditorium full of girls how many of them expected to have a "home and kids and a family." Hands shot up. Next, Peterson asked how many expected to work, and only a few errant hands were raised. Finally, she asked the girls how many of them had mothers who worked, and "all of those hands went up again," Peterson wrote in her 1995 memoir, "Restless." Nine out of ten of the girls would end up having jobs outside the house, she explained, "but each of the girls thought that she would be that tenth girl."

There are political consequences to remembering things that never happened and forgetting things that did. If what you mainly know about modern feminism is that its proponents immolated their underwear, you might well arrive at the conclusion that feminists are "obnoxious," as Leslie Sanchez does in her new book, "You've Come a Long Way, Maybe: Sarah, Michelle, Hillary and the Shaping of the New American Woman" (Palgrave; $25). "I don't agree with the feminist agenda," Sanchez writes. "To me, the word 'feminist' epitomizes the zealots of an earlier and more disruptive time." Here's what Sanchez would prefer: "No bra burning. No belting out Helen Reddy. Just calm concern for how women were faring in the world."

The world that Sanchez has in mind is really Washington, D.C. Sanchez has a day job as a Republican political analyst; perhaps this is why she measures progress solely by the percentage of people with government jobs who wear bras. Her great hope is that there will be a female President in her lifetime, and she bitterly regrets that the former governor of Alaska did not make it to the West Wing. "Most of us *are* Sarah Palins to one degree or another," Sanchez asserts. Palin "so very clearly reflected the lifestyle choices, hard work ethic, and traditional values that so many women admire."

One sign of our cultural memory disorder is that you can describe a female governor of a state as "traditional" and not get laughed at. Conservative career women are eager to describe themselves in those terms. "I don't like labels, but, if there's a label for me, it would be 'traditional,' and I'm very proud to be traditional," Cindy McCain told voters when her husband was running for President.

Since 2000, she has been the chairman of Hensley & Company, one of the largest distributors of beer in this country, with annual revenues exceeding three hundred million dollars.

Neither she nor Sarah Palin is, of course, a traditional woman. In a traditional family, a wife and mother does not pursue success outside her own home. Even when a large sector of the female population worked, as Peterson pointed out, women tried to forget this reality so that they could conceive of themselves as idealized traditional housewives. Traditionally, women were not considered suited to economic or professional independence, let alone political leadership, no matter what they had accomplished. "Billie Jean King was the winner of three Wimbledon titles in a single year and was supporting her household with the money she made from tennis," Collins writes, "but she could not get a credit card unless it was in the name of her husband, a law student with no income." Unquestioned male authority is the basis of traditional marriage, and that is why the zealots of an earlier and more disruptive time wanted to scrap it.

Feminists have long been criticized for telling women that they could have it all. But conservatives have done us one better: apparently, you can have it all and be traditional, too. Mrs. McCain told George Stephanopolous that she asked Palin, just after she was picked for the Republican national ticket, how Palin would reconcile her responsibilities as a mother with her prospective job. "She looked me square in the eye," Mrs. McCain recounted, "and she said, 'You know something? I'm a mother. I can do it.'" It used to be that conservatives thought motherhood disqualified women for full-time careers; now they've decided that it's a credential for higher office. All of this raises a question: why has feminism, which managed to win so many battles—the notion of a woman with a career has become perfectly unexceptionable—remained anathema to millions of women who are the beneficiaries of its success?

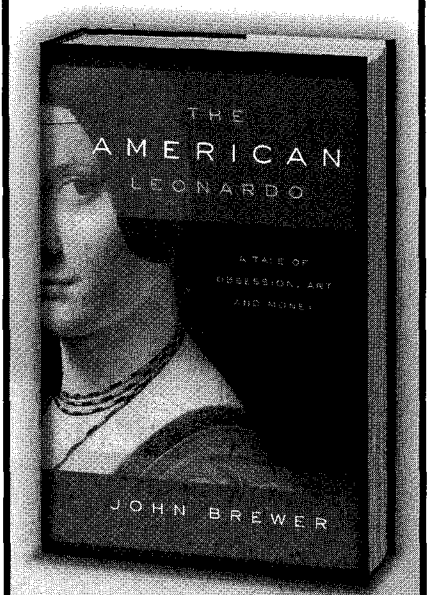
Once, it was easy to say what feminism was. Its aim was to win full citizenship for women, starting with suffrage, an issue that began amassing support in the United States in the eighteen-forties. More than a century later, Betty Friedan was working in that tradition when, in 1966, she co-founded the National Organization for Women, whose goal was to obtain legislative protections for women and insure employment parity. Like the suffragists, Friedan was devoted to a politics of equality.

Here's another detail we've forgotten: historically, it was the Republican Party that was more amenable to women's rights. "It had been the Democrats, with their base in heavily Catholic urban districts and the South, who were more likely to resist anything that encouraged women's independence from the home," Collins writes. The wealthier classes, represented by Republicans, had less to fear, because their families could continue pretty much undisturbed no matter how many activities the lady of the house busied herself with: they had staff.

By the late sixties and early seventies, of course, things had changed. The argument had moved from civic equality to personal liberation: feminists started talking about orgasms as well as ambitions. The women who marched past the Freedom Trash Can outside the Miss America pageant weren't protesting the absence of female judges; they were protesting the contest's underlying values. "The goals of liberation go beyond a simple concept of equality," Susan Brownmiller wrote in the *Times Magazine* in 1970. "NOW's emphasis on legislative change left the radicals cold." Betty Friedan became marginalized within the very organization she had started. (She was, as Brownmiller put it, "considered hopelessly bourgeois." Friedan returned fire by cautioning young women against the "bra-burning, anti-man" feminists who were supplanting her.) The radicals taking over feminism, many of whom were active in the civil-rights and antiwar movements, wanted to overthrow patriarchy, which would require transforming almost every aspect of society: child rearing, entertainment, housework, academics, romance, business, art, politics, sex.

Some of that happened and some of it didn't. By the early seventies, the Supreme Court had granted legal protection to birth control and abortion. But the politics of equality—forget liberation—swiftly ran into resistance. Catholic and Protestant conservatives found a common threat: the destruction of the traditional family. The Republican Bob

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?



"Excellent… has the unmistakable vibrancy of original research."
—The Sunday Times

"Brewer is a fine ringmaster.... He paints thorough pictures of each player."
—Publishers Weekly

THE AMERICAN LEONARDO
A TALE OF OBSESSION, ART AND MONEY

NOW AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

McDonnell, who won last week's race to become governor of Virginia, described the peril in a master's thesis he wrote in the nineteen-eighties: "A dynamic new trend of working women and feminists"—women who have sought "to increase their family income, or for some women, to break their perceived stereotypical role bonds and seek workplace equality and individual self-actualization"—is "ultimately detrimental to the family."

In the run-up to the election, McDonnell scrambled to distance himself from the thesis. But he was telling a particular truth that liberals and conservatives have different reasons for evading: if the father works and the mother works, nobody is left to watch the kids. In societies where these families constitute the majority, either government acknowledges the situation and helps provide child care (as many European countries do) or child care becomes a luxury affordable for the affluent, and a major problem for everyone else.

Social movements, like armies, define themselves by their conquests, not by their defeats. Feminism failed to make child care available to all, let alone bring about the total reconfiguration of the family that revolutionary feminists had envisaged, and that would have changed this country on a cellular level. Like so many other ideals of the sixties and seventies, the state-backed egalitarian family has gone from seeming—to both political parties—practical and inevitable to seeming utterly beyond the pale. The easier victories involved representation, or at least symbolic representation. For all the backlash against Roe v. Wade, the movement had steady success in getting women into the government and the private-sector workforce. The contours of mainstream feminism started to change accordingly. A politics of liberation was largely supplanted by a politics of identity.

But, if feminism becomes a politics of identity, it can safely be drained of ideology. Identity politics isn't much concerned with abstract ideals, like justice. It's a version of the old spoils system: align yourself with other members of a group—Irish, Italian, women, or whatever—and try to get a bigger slice of the resources that are being allocated. If a demand for revolution is tamed into a simple insistence on representation, then one woman is as good as another. You could have, in a sense, feminism without feminists. You could have, for example, Leslie Sanchez or Sarah Palin.

Sanchez acknowledges that Sarah Palin was a problematic candidate. She writes that Palin's interviews were "a mess," and that Palin gave Katie Couric "lackluster answers—many of which were downright incoherent." And yet she manages to wonder why female voters wouldn't "applaud her candidacy as a fellow-woman?"

When Gloria Steinem wrote, in the Los Angeles *Times*, that "Palin shares nothing but a chromosome with Clinton," Sanchez was outraged. She tells us, "As I read that, it means, 'you can run, Sarah Palin, but you won't get my support because you don't believe in all the same things I believe in.'" More precisely, Palin believes in almost none of the things that Steinem believes in. But for people like Sanchez—for people who are concerned chiefly with demographic victories—that's a trivial point. Hence Palin, during her first public appearance as the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee, could enjoin all women to vote for her: "It turns out the women of America aren't finished yet, and we can shatter that glass ceiling once and for all." Isn't that what really matters?

Revolutions are supposed to devour their young; in the case of feminism, it has been the other way around. Sanchez says that she speaks for many women who are happy to live and work in a reformed and comparatively fair America but dislike the movement responsible for this transformation. "Perhaps like me, they were put off by the brashness and tired agendas of the women's rights advocates," she writes. Content with symbolic representation, Sanchez shuns noisy activism to the point of embracing political quiescence: I am woman, hear me snore. But though Sanchez and her sisters (thirty-seven per cent of women describe themselves as conservative, and three out of four women abjure the label "feminist") may not like rowdy revolutionary posturing, we live in a country that has been reshaped by the women's movement, in which the traditional family is increasingly obsolete. As of September, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than sixty per cent of American women aged twenty and over were working or seeking work, and, according to the Shriver Report, women are either the primary or the co-breadwinner in two-thirds of American families. For many of them, this isn't an exercise in empowerment; it's about making a living and, for working mothers in particular, often a hard living.

Feminism as an identity politics has enjoyed real victories. It matters that women serve on the Supreme Court, that they make decisions in business, government, academia, and the media. But a preoccupation with representation suggests that feminism has lost its larger ambitions. We've come a long way in the past forty years; there's no "maybe" about it. The trouble is that the journey hasn't always been in the intended direction. These days, we can only dream about a federal program insuring that women with school-age children have affordable child care. If such a thing seems beyond the realm of possibility, though, that's another sign of our false-memory syndrome. In the early seventies, we very nearly got it.

In 1971, a bipartisan group of senators, led by Walter Mondale, came up with legislation that would have established both early-education programs and after-school care across the country. Tuition would be on a sliding scale based on a family's income bracket, and the program would be available to everyone but participation was required of no one. Both houses of Congress passed the bill.

Nobody remembers this, because, later that year, President Nixon vetoed the Comprehensive Child Development Act, declaring that it "would commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing" and undermine "the family-centered approach." He meant "the traditional-family-centered approach," which requires women to forsake every ambition apart from motherhood.

So close. And now so far. The amazing journey of American women is easier to take pride in if you banish thoughts about the roads not taken. When you consider all those women struggling to earn a paycheck while rearing their children, and start to imagine what might have been, it's enough to make you want to burn something. ♦

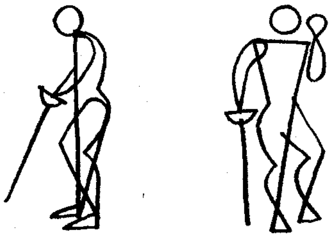
NEWYORKER.COM/GO/BOOKS

A reading list from Levy on the Book Bench.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The American Civil War, *by John Keegan, (Knopf; $35).* This military history finds that our "second revolution" was an improvised and desultory affair, a function largely of the vastness and the variety of nineteenth-century American terrain. It anticipated the First World War, in that it was a "body-count war," with bloody and inconclusive battles, fought mostly by men shooting from entrenchments. Keegan, a British military historian, admires the force of will that he sees in Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Lincoln, Sherman, and Grant, but John Frémont, Henry Halleck, and Don Carlos Buell are "lesser beings"; Jefferson Davis is a "fusspot"; and George McClellan is "insufficiently ruthless." Keegan's account is knotted by some redundancies, but it is vigorous. As he summarizes battle after battle, an uneasy monotony establishes itself, perhaps approximating the experience of the war itself.

Louis D. Brandeis, *by Melvin I. Urofsky (Pantheon; $40).* Brandeis, the jurist, lawyer, and reformer, liked to quote Goethe's maxim that "one is the master through small details," and Urofsky, to judge by this nearly thousand-page biography, shares a fondness for the fine-grained. He makes it clear that Brandeis grappled with a lifelong intellectual tension: the Brandeis of the fact-laden Brandeis Brief and, later, of so-called sociological jurisprudence saw the law as a "living organism" and welcomed change as "the only abiding thing"; but the democrat in him remained nostalgic for the days when business and government were small and mostly self-regulating. Just after Brandeis's appointment to the Supreme Court, Woodrow Wilson remarked, "I need him everywhere, but he must stay where he is." Urofsky, however, delights in his subject's being everywhere at once, and he nimbly chases after him in this commendably exhaustive work.



Last Night in Twisted River, *by John Irving (Random House; $28).* In a small New Hampshire logging town in 1954, the twelve-year-old son of a logging-camp chef inadvertently kills his father's lover with a cast-iron skillet after mistaking her for a bear. The dead woman is also involved with the crude town constable; fearing revenge, father and son flee, pursued by the implausibly relentless constable. The plot skitters recklessly through time (five decades), locations (Boston, Iowa, Vermont, Toronto), alluringly corpulent women (with names like Six-Pack Pam and Lady Sky), and the multiethnic restaurants at which the pair inevitably find a family. At times, Irving's skill as storyteller is impressive, but the book is marred by too much sentimental sprawl, and too many metafictional winks and precious plot twists. The characters' fates are never in doubt; from the beginning, it's clear that we are in "a world of accidents," in which "violence begets violence."

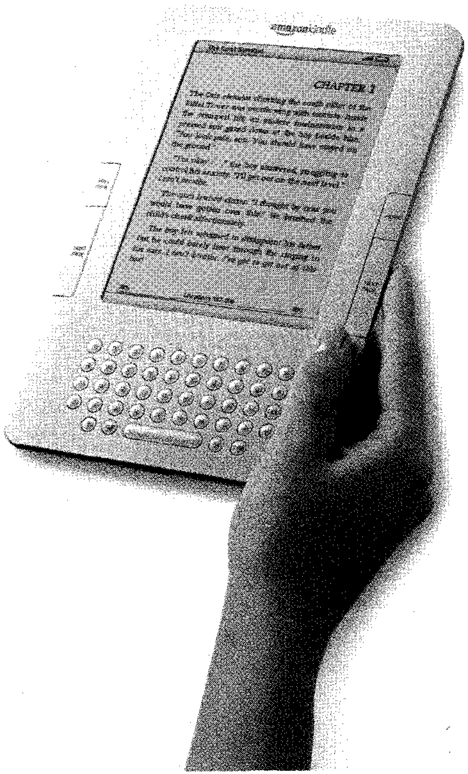
Upgraded to Serious, *by Heather McHugh (Copper Canyon; $22).* McHugh is known as a challenging wordsmith, but, as this collection reveals, she is also a compassionate eyewitness. On earth, "there's nothing/unastonishing—but get that too," McHugh writes in "Webcam the World," which lovingly takes on permanence as an obsession. Loss, after all, is a certainty; a human is "just a day-numbered ape/with a clue it was clay." Her lines are animated but serious, and though they accelerate quickly, meaning and humor can be found in a single word, like "sixtified," describing a speaker discussing sex in her sixties. Occasionally, the language is difficult, but the mournful "Practice Practice Practice" displays perfect clarity, beginning simply, "I know it's unseemly/to keep on grieving." Once you eliminate the obstacle of vocabulary, it is death, not language, that is truly difficult to parse.

In the time it takes
to read this review,
you can wirelessly
download an entire book.

Choose from 350,000 of the
most popular books, magazines,
and newspapers. Free wireless
delivery in less than 60 seconds.

amazonkindle

amazon.com/kindle

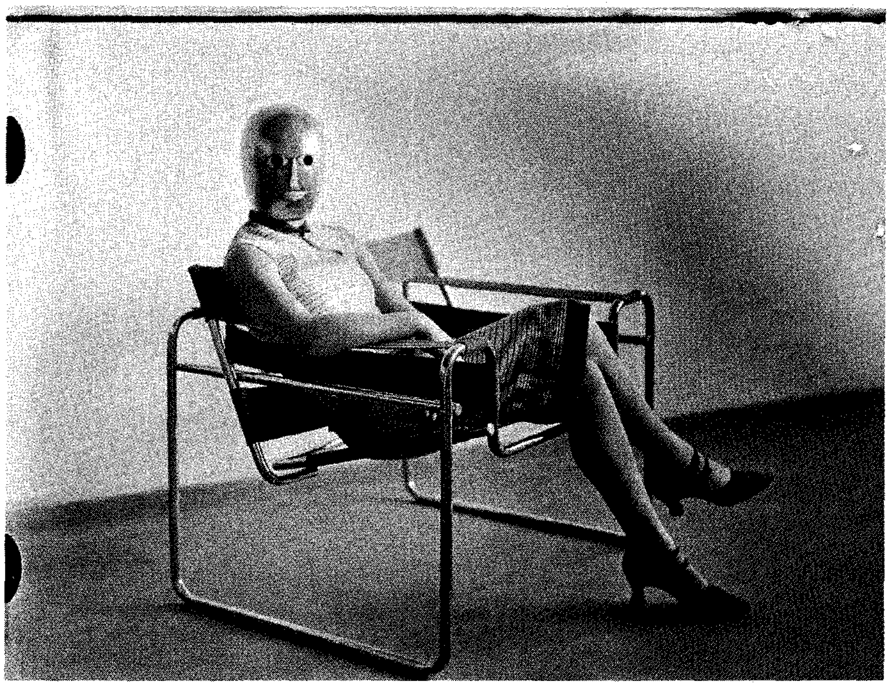


THE ART WORLD

BAUHAUS RULES

The making of a modern aesthetic.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



A woman in a Breuer club chair, wearing an Oskar Schlemmer mask, circa 1926.

© ESTATE OF ERICH CONSEMÜLLER

"Houses with lots of glass and shining metal: Bauhaus style," Ernst Kállai, an editor of publications at the Bauhaus, wrote in 1930, lampooning what we now call branding. He is quoted in the catalogue of "Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity," the Museum of Modern Art's multifarious retrospective of the school, think tank, and laboratory of modern art and design. Kállai went on, "The same is true of home hygiene without home atmosphere: Bauhaus style. Tubular steel armchair frames: Bauhaus style. Lamp with nickel-coated body and a disk of opaque glass as lampshade: Bauhaus style. Wallpaper patterned in cubes: Bauhaus style. No painting on the wall: Bauhaus style. Incomprehensible painting on the wall: Bauhaus style. Printing with sans-serif letters and bold rules: Bauhaus style. everything written in small letters: bauhaus style. EVERYTHING EXPRESSED IN CAPITAL LETTERS: BAUHAUS STYLE." Kállai spoke for a surge of radical politics under the second of the Bauhaus's three directors, the architect and Communist Hannes Meyer, who succeeded the visionary founder, Walter Gropius, in 1928, and was replaced by the pragmatic Ludwig Mies van der Rohe two years later. History would resolve matters in exactly the direction that Kállai mocked: toward a set of signature, fungible looks, the alphabet of a lingua franca of corporate chic which persists to this day. The MOMA show, with some four hundred works, is a cascade of invention, brilliant in itself and poignant for its varieties of foredoomed idealism.

First and last, the Bauhaus was an experiment in education. Gropius, who had been a German cavalry officer in the First World War, was invited, in 1919, to head a merger of the Weimar state schools of applied and fine arts. He dedicated the amalgam to "building" (*Bau*)—the engineering not just of new styles but of modern life writ large. He disallowed hierarchical distinctions between artists and artisans. Egalitarian pairs of artists and craft masters conducted hands-on workshops, rather than classes, in sculpture, metalwork, cabinetry, painting and decorating, printmaking, and weaving. Contrary to Gropius's subsequent claims, the idea wasn't new, but never had it been mobilized on such a scale and with so much talent. Early hires included Vasily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. Another painter, the charismatically strange Johannes Itten, bald and elfin, introduced a mandatory course in the supposed fundamentals of color, form, and material. That course, later taught by the Hungarian all-around avant-gardist László Moholy-Nagy and the former Bauhaus student Josef Albers, gave the school its lasting character of setting practical enterprise in the thin air of abstract analysis and ineffable intuition. Itten began every session with required yogic exercises, including rhythmic chants. He quit in protest in 1923, the year Gropius coined a slogan—"Art and technology: a new unity"—and ramped up efforts to find commercial partnerships for Bauhaus products. The deals paid off intermittently, notably with lines of lighting and wallpaper, while sparking predictable proprietary squabbles between the individual creators and the school. Gropius preached collective ownership but pursued his own lucrative architectural practice. The students (there were usually about a hundred and fifty) were exploited as unpaid labor, as in churning out copies of a fashionable chess set. Their rewards included a happy-few esprit de corps that was reinforced in zestful theatrical collaborations and at frequent parties.

The five years beginning in 1923 were the Bauhaus's heyday, marked by creative breakthroughs in many mediums, of which, for me, the most astonishing remain the tubular-steel chairs by Marcel Breuer, a former student then in his early twenties. (The late furniture sculptor and theoretician Scott Burton declared that Breuer's club chair, designed in 1925, is at least as important a work of modern art as the "Demoiselles d'Avignon." Once you have entertained that idea, it's hard to shake.) Other touchstones are austere, beautiful decorative weavings by Anni Albers (one of several prominent women at the school); rakishly angled photographs of architecture by Moholy-Nagy, and of people in alarming closeup by his wife, Lucia; and conceptually dizzying graphics by Herbert Bayer, including a 1924 fantasy of a multimedia building that would belch its name in letters of smoke. The period saw the Bauhaus's relocation, in 1925, under pressure from right-wing authorities in Weimar, to industrial Dessau, where Gropius quickly put up school buildings and houses for teaching masters, which became pilgrimage sites for aspiring modernists. A three-day visit to Dessau by a dazzled Alfred Barr, in 1927, bore fruit two years later, when he became MOMA's founding director. The museum's design department sometimes resembled Kállai's index of Bauhaus clichés, with an infatuated confidence that the platonic pencil sharpener, say, could save the world. Barr let Gropius mount a self-mythologizing exhibition at the museum in 1938. The current show's curators, Leah Dickerman and Barry Bergdoll, emphasize material that Gropius omitted because it was insufficiently reflective of his glory.

Hannes Meyer's regime, dedicated to serving the proletariat with modular construction and household conveniences, was squelched by the Dessau government in 1930, leaving Mies—who eased out the Communists, marginalized Itten's fundamentals course, and otherwise reformed the school along conservative lines—to cope with the growing menace of National Socialism. Hounded from Dessau in 1932, the Bauhaus moved to Berlin, where, months later, an announcement of its dissolution crossed in the mail with a letter from the Gestapo permitting its survival if certain objectionable teachers were fired. Mies said, "We would have agreed to these conditions, but the economic situation does not allow for a continuation of the institution." (That sounds craven today, but it's hard to imagine, let alone judge, the desperation of that time in Germany.) Mies went on to a more than successful career in America, of course. The show gave me freshened eyes for his Seagram Building, on Park Avenue, the best skyscraper by a wide margin in the International Style, an aesthetic whose forms, but not its penchant for mediocrity, had roots in the Bauhaus. The sublimely proportioned building and its plaza—harmonizing bronze and marble with water and foliage—exalt a luxurious simplicity that transcends style. Breuer's work does the same. A big cabinet by him in plywood sections given an elm veneer or painted blue or lustrous black, with glass shelves and sliding glass doors, quite disgraces some excellent furniture by Albers, with which it is displayed. Such quality pertains to genius. It cannot be taught.

Painters loom large in the early going of the show. Kandinsky's clamorous orchestrations of modernistic signs and symbols and Klee's roughly textured, fine-lined reveries, including his evergreen "Twittering Machine" (1922), channel influences of German Expressionism, Russian Constructivism, and Dada. But Gropius's use for cutting-edge art was purely instrumental. He aimed to integrate painting and sculpture with design, and to make all serve architecture—and also theatre, entailing far-out sets and costumes, and puppets galore. The project succeeded only too well for artists whose formal ideas were studied and appropriated to functional ends. Their role as co-leaders of workshops declined to the status of outliers to the really serious work of the school. Photography, photomontage, and graphic design eclipsed painting. Klee left.

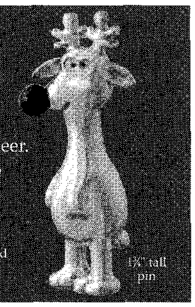
Strong essays by Dickerman and Bergdoll in the show's superb catalogue acknowledge the dated, unattractive aspects of the Bauhaus as a projection of utopia marked by mechanistic views of human nature. Dickerman comments strikingly on a photograph, circa 1926, of a young woman in a Breuer club chair, wearing a dress made by Bauhaus weavers and a metallic primitivist mask by the painter Oskar Schlemmer. The "blank visage" of the mask, Dickerman writes, "is both deracinated and classless, just as the Bauhaus accoutrements of modern life are stripped of cultural traces. . . . The Bauhaus subject is a robotic mute," passing "easily across political borders." Such was the Bauhaus's contribution to the twentieth century's parade of ideologically fashioned "new men," overcoming bourgeois individualism and the benighted frailties that had been consoled by religion and poetry. Recently, I met a young architect and requested a free association on the word "Bauhaus." She said, "Rigor! Rigor! Rigor!" Keep that in mind at MOMA. The show conveys an effect less of God, in Mies's famous quip, being in the details than of the details putting God out of a job. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

Multimedia: Schjeldahl on the Bauhaus.

McLean Hospital
A Harvard Medical School Affiliate
THE McLEAN CENTER
AT FERNSIDE
Effective residential treatment for addiction and depression.
mcleanfernside.org
Princeton, MA 800.906.9531

Boynton Collection
Don we now our Bob,
the carnelian-nosed reindeer.
Sterling Silver $75, 14K Gold $399
1-800-477-1856
www.dallaspridgenjewelry.com
©Sandra Boynton, All Rights Reserved



Our Famous Cashmere Watchcap
Never an itch. Amazingly Warm and Soft.
GolightlyCashmere.com
superior socks • neck gaiters • hats
scarves • mittens • berets • shawls • baby
Made in Taos, NM 575.776.8287

'The Heart of Today'
a film about New York
www.worldspirit.org.uk

The Perfect Gift...
The Essential Fireplace Tool
Handcrafted in New England since 1941
1-800-601-6642
THE ORIGINAL BRASS BloPoke™
www.blopoke.com

Margaret W. Wong Immigration Center
www.imwong.com
1-866-254-0687
Preeminent Immigration Lawyers
Green Cards, H-1B, Deportation, Motions,
Criminal Aliens, Work Permits, US Citizen
Listen to Margaret Wong Thursdays 9pm at http://chataboutit.com

ADDICTED?
Dawn Farm offers long-term treatment for drug and alcohol addiction on a working farm. Accredited, internationally known, a unique program with affordable care and real recovery.
www.dawnfarm.org • 734.485.8725

THE CURRENT CINEMA

DEATH CALLS

"The Messenger" and "The Box."

BY DAVID DENBY

In "The Messenger," Captain Tony Stone (Woody Harrelson), an Army lifer with a shaved head and a face like a cement block, and Staff Sergeant Will Montgomery (Ben Foster), a coiled, secretive Iraq-war hero, work together in one of the most difficult jobs in the armed services: informing parents and spouses that a loved one has been killed. They tell them immediately, hard upon the death, before the news can appear on the Internet or in the local paper. Messengers? For the families, the sternly polite men, arriving at the door in bemedalled uniforms and tilted berets, seem to be death itself. There's an excruciatingly obvious but unavoidable irony here: "The Messenger" has also taken on the unwelcome task of telling its audience what it doesn't much want to hear—how families are devastated by war. Yet the film is neither dutiful nor solemn. This is a fully felt, morally alert, marvellously acted piece of work. Despite the grim subject, it's a sweet-tempered movie, with moments of explosive humor—an entertainment.

The picture was written not by Americans but by two foreign-born men working in Hollywood—Alessandro Camon, an Italian, and Oren Moverman, the director, who is a four-year veteran of the Israeli military. If these two missed certain shades of American colloquial speech, my ear didn't detect it. The movie is by turns loquacious and raptly silent, and Moverman, directing for the first time, is tremendously talented at handling actors; he gives them the time and the space to work out characters who have layers and corners and shadows. We get to know these men well, yet we still think of them as mysterious.

Ben Foster and Woody Harrelson as soldiers who inform families of war deaths.

YVETTA FEDOROVA

Harrelson's Tony Stone has been on death duty for a long time. An alcoholic temporarily on the wagon, he may no longer be qualified to do much else in the Army. Harrelson, with his eye-popping glare and acetylene voice, has often played wild men (most memorably in "The People vs. Larry Flynt"), but this time the antic aggression is bounded by rules—the Army protocols that keep the Captain functioning. As Harrelson slowly reveals, Tony, underneath his bristle and bluster, is utterly chaotic. Full of useless, ribald wisdom about women and relationships, he's an ungovernable, unmarriageable, desperately lonely man who, when not working, won't stop chattering to young Will. At first, Will, who is serving out the last three months of his tour while recuperating from wounds, has little interest in talking, and he looks at the overbearing Tony the way a sea bass looks at a shark. In these opening scenes, Ben Foster (from "3:10 to Yuma" and the HBO series "Six Feet Under") holds himself back. But this twenty-nine-year-old actor, with his melancholy blue eyes and long jaw, may be one of the great spellbinders of his generation. When he's silent, his face is entirely alive; his eyes seem to be looking inward and outward at the same time. It turns out that there's a lot churning around inside Will. At the beginning of the movie, his girlfriend goes to bed with him and then returns to the man she has decided, in his absence, to marry. And the Sergeant has battlefield griefs of his own, which remain hidden for a long time. Alone in his room, he goes through violent convulsions, throwing his body around in rage, which Foster turns into prolonged, wordless arias. By degrees, he and the filmmakers ease this man back into life. Tony may be unable to survive outside the Army, but Will is by nature a civilian. He begins responding to people, talking, opening himself up to feelings. Tony, he realizes, is a damaged man but means him no harm, and they become quarrelling, roistering friends. The Captain starts drinking again, and the booze and the men's own kind of mad horseplay get them through the job. Along the way, "The Messenger" offers one of the most shrewdly perceptive portraits of military men to have appeared in American movies since such classics as "From Here to Eternity" and "The Last Detail."

On the first day of the partnership, Tony establishes the drill: stick to polite but formal announcements. Don't hug anyone; don't get involved. The movie was shot in suburban New Jersey, where the men stiffly approach modest wood-frame houses. They make six calls in all, spread throughout the movie, and the response to each is different. Disbelief, fury, violence, breakdowns, numb acceptance—every emotion that you might expect is there. Watching this, of course, puts us in a morally ambivalent position: our neighbors' troubles have been turned into theatre. The way people respond to tragedy has a prurient interest for outsiders, but art transcends mere fascination. Moverman doesn't flinch from emotions, but he doesn't sensationalize them, either, and his full-bore sympathy is infinitely superior to a real-life documentary approach, which would truly be an invasion. By the end, like spectators at a Greek tragedy, we feel more like participants than like voyeurs. We want to see more of these people, not less.

In violation of every Army rule, Will becomes attached to Olivia (Samantha Morton), the white widow of an African-American soldier, who has a young son. Moverman lets many of the scenes play at length, drawing us into the moment-by-moment shifts in mood; the scenes between Harrelson and Foster are all superb, but the movie's pulse slackens a bit when Morton is allowed to hold the camera too long. Morton was passive and mute in Woody Allen's "Sweet and Lowdown"; she was one of the seers floating in water in Steven Spielberg's "Minority Report." She's a little vague, as if she were always floating. Moverman would have done better to cast a more overtly sexual actress—Amy Ryan, ay, or Vera Farmiga. But even this mistep is the product of respect for the characters, who need to slowly figure out what to do with their lives. "The Messenger" joins the group of strong Iraq-war movies that, like rejected suitors, stand hat in hand, waiting for an audience to notice their virtues. (My canon includes "In the Valley of Elah," "The Hurt Locker," and the commercially conceived but affecting "Stop-Loss.") Box-office wisdom holds that it's too early to make movies about this conflict, but how can it ever be too early to make a good movie?

In 2001, the writer-director Richard Kelly, who was only twenty-six at the time, created "Donnie Darko," a near-masterpiece of psychological suspense and apocalyptic mystification, which has since become one of the most popular cult films of the past decade. For all its talk of tangent universes and the end of the world and its time funnels swirling through living rooms, the movie also gave us an acute, satirical impression of a suburban high school and featured a great, mischievous performance by a young Jake Gyllenhaal, who managed to suggest that his character, Donnie, was, at the same moment, both brilliant and completely out of it. Kelly's new movie, "The Box," based on a story by Richard Matheson, doesn't come close to "Donnie Darko" in psychological interest; it's more a supernatural morality tale. The movie is set in 1976, after Viking photographs of Mars raise the possibility that there are "forces" out there in the universe. A courtly gent (Frank Langella) in a topcoat and homburg, whose face has been partly sheared away by a lightning bolt, mysteriously shows up at the house of a NASA engineer (James Marsden) and his schoolteacher wife (Cameron Diaz). He gives them a choice: if they push a button inside a small glass dome that he leaves with them, they will collect a million dollars in cash but, in turn, someone they don't know will die. The great Langella, soft-voiced and menacing, makes this outrageous proposal sound matter-of-fact. Even with his flesh torn away, he's a charmer. Is he playing God or the Devil? Needless to say, they push the button, and not only death but other horrors ensue.

Kelly, as he did in "Donnie Darko," avoids obvious scare techniques. Instead, he makes the bizarre, the surreal, and the frightening emerge from normal reality. The man in the homburg has many employees who look like zombies, but they're not disintegrating pieces of protoplasm—just human beings who seem a little off. Kelly has a tactile feeling for watery surfaces, and he works with vast industrial spaces, huge research installations that seem to be all metal exoskeleton and eerie white light. He holds us with his extravagant virtuosity and his ability to create suspense through long sequences, though the movie is meaningless for anyone with genuine moral curiosity. "The Box" turns into a kind of sacrilegious Christian fable; it's haunted by God, but it delivers a vicious doctrine. At the risk of impoliteness, I would suggest that Kelly drop his reliance on religio-mystico-eschatological humbug and embrace, in realistic terms, the fantastic possibilities in ordinary acts of murder, fear, heroism, and death. If he pulls himself together, he could be the next Hitchcock. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

The Front Row, a blog about movies.

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT ©2009 CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

VOLUME LXXXV, NO. 37, November 16, 2009. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 9 & 16, June 8 & 15, July 6 & 13, August 10 & 17, and December 21 & 28) by Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Elizabeth Hughes, vice-president and publisher; Beth Lusko, associate publisher advertising; Anjali Saigal, associate publisher marketing services; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Lynn Oberlander, general counsel. Condé Nast Publications: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Jennifer Graham, senior vice-president-finance; Jill Bright, executive vice-president/human resources. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001. Canada Post: return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684, call (800) 825-2510, or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. Subscribers: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. If during your subscription term or up to one year after the magazine becomes undeliverable, you are ever dissatisfied with your subscription, let us know. You will receive a full refund on all unmailed issues. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Beth Lusko at (212) 286-4454. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For permissions and reprint requests, please call (212) 630-5656 or fax requests to (212) 630-5883. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online at www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

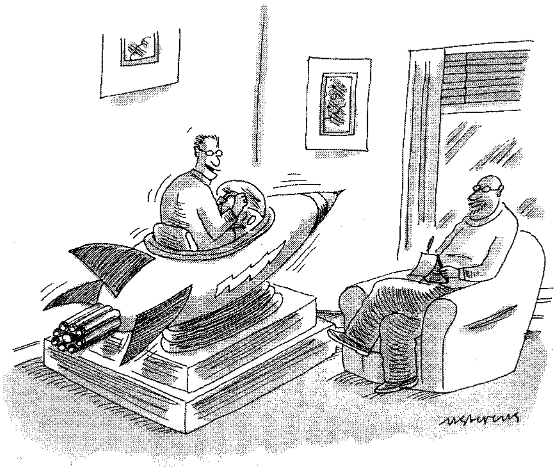
THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS MAGAZINE

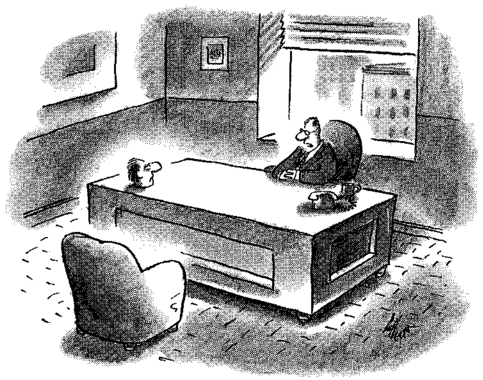
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Tom Cheney, must be received by Sunday, November 15th. The finalists in the November 2nd contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the November 30th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the U.S. or Canada (except Quebec) age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"What do you mean time's up? I just put another quarter in."
Annette Gasparon, Secane, Pa.



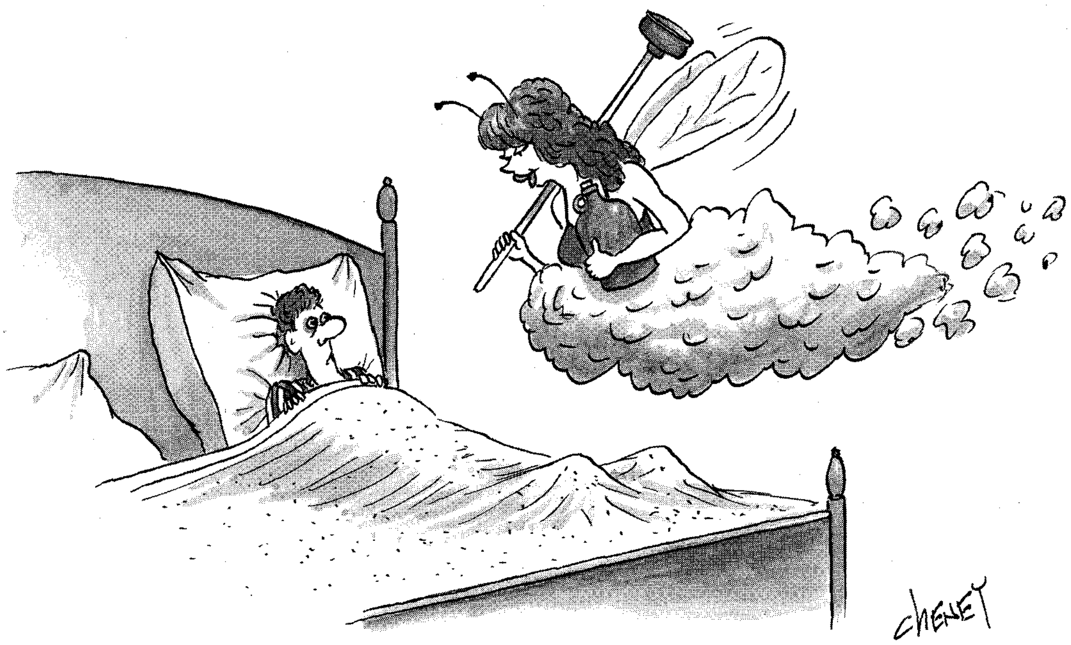
THE FINALISTS

"Please use a coaster."
James Mulcahy, Thunder Bay, Ont.

"I'm afraid we need to make more cuts."
David Kessler, New York City

"I'm sorry I couldn't get more for you in the divorce settlement."
Rick Kaufman, Dover, N.H.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



“ ”

GE ROVER: THE LUXURY THAT'S MORE THAN A LUXURY.
LAND ROVER

Rodolphe found Mademoiselle
Laure at the trysting place.
"Good," said he, "for punctuality
she is a feminine Breguet."

Henry Murger, "Scenes of Bohemian Life", 1848
The work that inspired Puccini for his opera "La Bohème"

BREGUET 3187

Héritage Collection - Automatic Movement and Small Seconds - 3661BB

www.breguet.com

Breguet Boutique, 779 Madison Avenue, New York, (212) 288-4014
Breguet Boutique, 280 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 860-9911
PARIS - CANNES - GENEVA - VIENNA - LONDON - DUBAI - MOSCOW - SINGAPORE - TOKYO - SEOUL